THE EVIDENCES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

WITH

ADDITIONAL DISCOURSES ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS,

VIZ.

Of GOD, and his ATTRIBUTES.
The POWER and WISDOM of GOD in the CREATION.
The PROVIDENCE of GOD.
The WORSHIP of GOD.
Advantages of REVELATION above Natural REASON.
Excellency of the CHRISTIAN INSTITUTION.
Dignity of the SCRIPTURE LANGUAGE.
Againſt ATHEISM and INFIDELITY.
Againſt the Modern FREE-THINKERS.
Immortality of the SOUL, and a FUTURE STATE.
DEATH and JUDGMENT.

Collected from the Writings of

The Right Hon. JOSEPH ADDISON, Eſq;

The FIFTH EDITION enlarged.

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PREFACE.

THE character of Mr. ADDISON and his writings, for juſtneſs of thought, ſtrength of reaſoning, and purity of ſtyle, is too well eſtabliſhed to need a recommendation; but their greateſt ornament, and that which gives a luſtre to all the reſt, is his appearing, throughout, a zealous advocate for virtue and religion, againſt profaneneſs and infidelity. And becauſe his excellent diſcourſes upon thoſe ſubjects ly diſperſed among his other writings, and are by that means not ſo generally known and read as they deſerve, it was judged to be no unſeaſonable ſervice to religion at this time, to move the Bookſeller to publiſh them together in a diſtinct volume; in hopes, that the politeneſs and beauty peculiar to Mr. ADDISON's writings would make their way to perſons of a ſuperior character and a more liberal education; and, that as they come from the hands of a Layman, they may be the more readily received and conſidered by young Gentlemen, as a proper manual of religion.

Our modern Sceptics and Infidels are great pretenders to reaſon and philoſophy, and are willing to have it thought that none who are really poſſeſſed of thoſe talents, can eaſily aſſent to the truth of Chriſtianity. But it falls out very unfortunately for them and their cauſe, that thoſe perſons within our own memory, who are confeſſed to have been the moſt perfect reaſoners and philoſophers of their time, are alſo known to have been firm believers, and they Laymen; I mean, Mr. BOYLE, Mr. LOCKE, Sir ISAAC NEWTON, and Mr. ADDISON; who, modeſtly ſpeaking, were as good thinkers and reaſoners, as the beſt among the Sceptics and Infidels at this day. Some of them might have their particular opinions about this or that point in Chriſtianity, which will be the caſe as long as men are men; but the thing here inſiſted on, is, That they were accurate reaſoners, and at the ſame time firm believers.

Mr. BOYLE, the moſt exact ſearcher into the works of nature that any age has known, and who ſaw Atheiſm and Infidelity beginning to ſhew themſelves in the looſe and voluptuous reign of King Charles the Second, purſued his philoſophical inquiries with religious views, to eſtabliſh the minds of men in a firm belief and thorough ſenſe of the infinite power and wiſdom of the great Creator.

This

This account we have from Dr. *Burnet.* one who was intimately acquainted with him, and preached his funeral ſermon: "It appeared to *Life*, p. 22. "thoſe who converſed with him "in his inquiries into nature, that his main "deſign in that (on which as he had his own "eye moſt conſtantly, ſo he took care to "put others often in mind of it) was to raiſe "in himſelf and others, vaſter thoughts of "the greatneſs and glory, and of the wiſdom "and goodneſs of God. This was ſo deep "in his thoughts, that he concludes the ar-"ticle of his will, which relates to that il-"luſtrious body, the Royal Society, in "theſe words: Wiſhing them a happy ſuc-"ceſs in their laudable attempts, to diſco-"ver the true nature of the works of God; "and praying that they and all other ſearch-"ers into phyſical truths, may cordially "refer their attainments to the glory of the "great Author of nature, and to the com-"fort of mankind." The ſame perſon alſo ſpeaks thus of him, "He had the profound-"eſt veneration for the great God of hea-"ven and earth, that ever I obſerved in any "perſon. The very name of GOD was "never mentioned by him without a pauſe "and a viſible ſtop in his diſcourſe."

And, of the ſtrictneſs and exemplarineſs of the whole courſe of his life, he ſays, "I might here challenge Ibid. p. 9.

" the whole tribe of Libertines, to come " and view the uſefulneſs, as well as the " excellence of the Chriſtian religion, in a " life that was entirely dedicated to it."

Againſt the Atheiſts he wrote his *Free inquiry into the received notion of nature* (to confute the pernicious principle of aſcribing effects to nature, which are only produced by the infinite power and wiſdom of God); and alſo his *Eſſay about* final *cauſes of things natural*, to ſhew that all things in nature were made and contrived with great order, and every thing for its proper end and uſe, by an all-wiſe Creator.

Againſt the Deiſts, he wrote a treatiſe *of things above reaſon*; in which he makes it appear that ſeveral things which we judge to be contrary to reaſon, becauſe above the reach of our underſtanding, are not therefore to be thought unreaſonable, becauſe we cannot comprehend them, ſince they may be apparently reaſonable to a greater and more comprehenſive underſtanding. And he wrote another treatiſe, to ſhow the poſſibility of the *Reſurrection of the ſame body*.

The veneration he had for the holy ſcriptures, appears not only from his ſtudying them with great exactneſs, and exhorting others to do the ſame; but more particularly from a diſtinct treatiſe which he wrote, on purpoſe to defend the ſcripture-ſtyle, and to anſwer all the objections which profane and irreligious

irreligious perſons have made againſt it. And ſpeaking of morality conſidered as a rule of life, he ſays, "I have formerly taken "pains to peruſe books of morality; "yet ſince they have only a power to "perſuade, but not to command, and ſin "and death do not neceſſarily attend the "diſobedience of them, they have the leſs "influence; for ſince we may take the li- "berty to queſtion human writers, I find "that the methods they take to impoſe their "writings upon us, may ſerve to counte- "nance either truth or falſhood." *Life*, p. 17

His zeal to propagate Chriſtianity in the world, appears by many and large benefactions to that end; which are enumerated in his funeral ſermon: "He was at "the charge of the tranſlation and "impreſſion of the New Teſtament "into the Malayan language, which he ſent "over all the Eaſt-Indies. He gave a noble "reward to him that tranſlated GROTIUS's "incomparable book of the *Truth of the "Chriſtian religion* into Arabick, and was at "the charge of a whole impreſſion, which "he took care to order to be diſtributed in "all the countries where that language is "underſtood. He was reſolved to have "carried on the impreſſion of the New Te- "ſtament in the Turkiſh language; but the "company thought it became them to be "the doers of it, and ſo ſuffered him only *Life*, p. 36.

"to

" to give a large ſhare towards it.——He
" was at ſeven hundred pounds charge
Life, " in the edition of the Iriſh Bible,
p. 37. " which he ordered to be diſtributed in
" Ireland, and he contributed largely both
" to the impreſſions of the Welſh Bible,
" and of the Iriſh Bible in Scotland. He
" gave during his life three hundred pounds
" to advance the deſign of propagating the
" Chriſtian religion in America; and as ſoon
" as he heard that the Eaſt-India Company
" were entertaining propoſitions for the like
" deſign in the Eaſt, he preſently ſent an
" hundred pounds for a beginning and an
" example, but intended to carry it much
" further, when it ſhould be ſet on foot to
" purpoſe. He had deſigned, though ſome
" accidents did upon great conſiderations
" divert him from ſettling it during his life,
" but not from ordering it by his will, that
" a liberal proviſion ſhould be made for one,
" who ſhould in a very few well-digeſted
" ſermons, every year ſet forth the truth of
" the Chriſtian religion, in general, with-
" out deſcending to the ſubdiviſions amongſt
" Chriſtians; and who ſhould be changed
" every third year, that ſo this noble ſtudy
" and employment might paſs through ma-
" ny hands, by which means many might
" become maſters of the argument."

In his younger years, he had thoughts of entering into holy orders; and one reaſon that

that determined him againſt it, was, that he believed he might in ſome reſpects be more ſerviceable to religion, by continuing a Layman; "His having no in-
"tereſts, with relation to religion, beſides thoſe of ſaving his own
"ſoul, gave him, as he thought, a more
"unſuſpected authority in writing or acting
"on that ſide. He knew the profane
"crew fortified themſelves againſt all that
"was ſaid by men of our profeſſion, with
"this, that it was their trade, and that they
"were paid for it: He hoped therefore
"that he might have the more influence,
"the leſs he ſhared in the patrimony of the
"church." *Life*, p. 37.

Mr. LOCKE, whoſe accurate talent in reaſoning is ſo much celebrated even by the Sceptics and Infidels of our times, ſhowed his zeal for Chriſtianity, firſt, in his middle age, by publiſhing a diſcourſe on purpoſe to demonſtrate the reaſonableneſs of believing Jeſus to be the promiſed Meſſiah; and, after that, in the laſt years of his life, by a very judicious commentary upon ſeveral of the epiſtles of St. Paul.

He ſpeaks of the MIRACLES wrought by our Saviour and his Apoſtles, in the ſtrongeſt manner, both as facts unexceptionably true, and as the cleareſt evidences of a divine miſſion. His words are theſe: "The evidence *Reaſonableneſs*, &c. p. 256.

"of

" of our Saviour's miſſion from heaven is " ſo great, in the multitude of his miracles " he did before all ſorts of people (which the " divine providence and wiſdom has ſo or- " dered, that they never were nor could be " denied by any of the enemies and oppoſers " of Chriſtianity) that what he delivered, " cannot but be received as the oracles of " God, and unqueſtionable verity."

Ibid. p. 263. " And again; After his reſurrection, " he ſent his Apoſtles amongſt the " nations, accompanied with miracles; which " were done in all parts ſo frequently, and be- " fore ſo many witneſſes of all ſorts, in broad " day-light, that, as I have often obſerved, " the enemies of Chriſtianity have never " dared to deny them; no, not JULIAN " himſelf, who neither wanted ſkill nor " power to inquire into the truth; nor " would have failed to have proclaimed and " expoſed it, if he could have detected any " falſhood in the hiſtory of the goſpel, or " found the leaſt ground to queſtion the " matter of fact publiſhed by Chriſt and " his Apoſtles. The number and evidence " of the miracles done by our Saviour and " his followers, by the power and force of " truth, bore down this mighty and accom- " pliſhed Emperor and all his parts, in his " own dominions. He durſt not deny ſo " plain matter of fact; which being grant- " ed, the truth of our Saviour's doctrine " and

" and miſſion unavoidably follows; not-
" withſtanding whatſoever artful ſuggeſti-
" ons his wit could invent, or malice ſhould
" offer to the contrary."

To thoſe who aſk, " What need was there
" of a Saviour? what advantage have we
" by Jeſus Chriſt?" Mr. LOCKE re- Ibid.
" plies, " It is enough to juſtify p. 255.
" the fitneſs of any thing to be done
" by reſolving it into the wiſdom of God,
" who has done it; whereof our narrow un-
" derſtandings, and ſhort views may utterly
" incapacitate us to judge. We know little of
" this viſible, and nothing atall of the ſtate
" of that intellectual world (wherein are infi-
" nite numbers and degrees of ſpirits out of
" the reach of our ken or gueſs), and there-
" fore know not what tranſactions there were
" between God and our Saviour, in refe-
" rence to his kingdom. We know not
" what need there was to ſet up a head and
" a Chieftain, in oppoſition to THE PRINCE
" OF THIS WORLD, THE PRINCE OF THE
" POWER OF THE AIR, &c. whereof there
" are more than obſcure intimations in ſcri-
" pture. And we ſhall take too much up-
" on us, if we ſhall call God's wiſdom or
" providence to account, and pertly con-
" demn for needleſs, all that our weak, and
" perhaps biaſſed underſtanding cannot ac-
" count for." And then he ſhews at large

the

Ibid. 260. the neceſſity there was of the goſpel-revelation, to deliver the world from the miſerable ſtate of darkneſs and ignorance that mankind were in,
257. 1. As to the true knowledge of God,
264. 2. As to the worſhip to be paid him,
282. 3. As to the duties to be performed to him. To which he adds the mighty
284. aids and encouragements to the performance of our duty. 1. From the aſſurance the goſpel gives us of future rewards and puniſhments; and 2. From
289. the promiſe of the Spirit of God to direct and aſſiſt us.

The holy ſcriptures are every where mentioned by him with the greateſt reverence. He calls them the Holy Books, the Sacred Text, Holy Writ, and Divine Revelation; and exhorts Chriſtians "to betake themſelves in "earneſt to the ſtudy of the way to "ſalvation, in theſe holy writings, "wherein God has revealed it from heaven, "and propoſed it to the world; ſeeking our "religion where we are ſure it is in truth to "be found, comparing ſpiritual things with "ſpiritual." And, in a letter written the year before his death, to one who aſked this queſtion, "What is "the ſhorteſt and ſureſt way, for a "young Gentleman to attain to a true know-"ledge of the Chriſtian religion, in the full "and

Pref. to Comment. Ibid. p. 24. *Poſth. Works,* p. 344.

"and juſt extent of it?" his anſwer is, "Let him ſtudy the holy ſcripture, eſpecially the New Teſtament. Therein are "contained the words of eternal life. It "has God for its Author; ſalvation for its "end; and truth, without any mixture of "error, for its matter." A direction that was copied from his own practice, in the latter part of his life, and after his retirement from buſineſs; when for "fourteen or fifteen years, he applied himſelf eſpecially to the ſtudy of the "holy ſcriptures, and employed the laſt years "of his life hardly in any thing elſe. He was "never weary of admiring the great views of "that ſacred book, and the juſt relation of "all its parts. He every day made diſcoveries in it, that gave him freſh cauſe of "admiration." *Poſth. Works*, p. 20.

Of St. Paul in particular, upon ſeveral of whoſe epiſtles he drew up a moſt uſeful commentary, he ſays, "That he "was miraculouſly called to the miniſtry of the goſpel, and "declared to be a choſen veſſel:—That he "had the whole doctrine of the goſpel from "God by immediate revelation:—That for "his information in the Chriſtian knowledge, "and the myſteries and depths of the diſpenſation of God by Jeſus Chriſt, God "himſelf had condeſcended to be his inſtructor and teacher:—That he had re- *Comment.* p. 16.

"ceived the light of the goſpel, from the "fountain and father of light himſelf:—and, "That an exact obſervation of his reaſon- "ings and inferences, is the only ſafe guide "for the right underſtanding of him, un- "der the ſpirit of God, that directed theſe "ſacred writings." p. 17.

Poſth. Works, p. 21. And the death of this great man was agreeable to his life. For we are informed by one who was with him when he died, and had lived in the ſame family for ſeven years before, that the day before his death he particularly exhorted all about him to read the holy ſcriptures, that he deſired to be remembered by them at evening prayers; and being told, that if he would, the whole family ſhould come and pray by him in his chamber, he anſwered, he ſhould be very glad to have it ſo, if it would not give too much trouble; that an occaſion offering to ſpeak of the goodneſs of God, he eſpecially exalted the love which God ſhewed to man, in juſtifying him by faith in Jeſus Chriſt; and returned God thanks in particular for having called him to the knowledge of that divine Saviour.

Ibid. p. 20, 21.

Poſth. Works, p. 328. About two months before his death he drew up a letter to a certain Gentleman (who afterwards diſtinguiſhed himſelf by a very different way of thinking

thinking and writing) and left this direction upon it, "To be delivered to him after my deceaſe." In it, are theſe remarkable words, "This life is a ſcene of vanity that ſoon "paſſes away, and affords no ſolid ſatisfa- "ction, but in the conſciouſneſs of doing "well, and in the hopes of another life. "This is what I can ſay upon experience, "and what you will find to be true, when "you come to make up the account."

Sir ISAAC NEWTON, univerſally acknowledged to be the ableſt philoſopher and mathematician that this or perhaps any other nation has produced, is alſo well known to have been a firm believer, and a ſerious Chriſtian. His diſcoveries concerning the frame and ſyſtem of the univerſe, were applied by him, as Mr. BOYLE's inquiries into nature had been, to demonſtrate againſt Atheiſts of all kinds, the being of a God, and to illuſtrate his power and wiſdom in the creation of the world. Of which a better account cannot be given, than in the words of an ingenious perſon who has been much converſant in his philoſophical writings: "At the "end of his mathematical prin- "ciples of natural philoſophy, he has gi- "ven us his thoughts concerning the Deity. "Wherein he firſt obſerves, that the ſimili- "tude found in all parts of the univerſe, "makes it undoubted, that the whole is

View of his Philoſophy. p. 405.

" governed by one ſupreme Being, to whom " the original is owing of the frame of na- " ture, which evidently is the effect of " choice and deſign. He then proceeds " briefly to ſtate the beſt metaphyſical noti- " ons concerning God. In ſhort, we can- " not conceive either of ſpace or time other- " wiſe than as neceſſarily exiſting; this Be- " ing therefore, on whom all others depend, " muſt certainly exiſt by the ſame neceſſity " of nature; conſequently where-ever ſpace " and time is found, there God muſt alſo " be. And as it appears impoſſible to us, " that ſpace ſhould be limited, or that time " ſhould have had a beginning, the Deity " muſt be both immenſe and eternal."

This great man applied himſelf with the utmoſt attention to the ſtudy of the holy ſcriptures, and conſidered the ſeveral parts of them with an uncommon exactneſs; particularly, as to the order of time, and the ſeries of prophecies and events relating to the Meſſiah. Upon which head, he left behind him an elaborate diſcourſe, to prove that the famous prophecy of Daniel's Weeks, which has been ſo induſtriouſly perverted by the Deiſts of our times, was an expreſs prophecy of the coming of the Meſſiah, and fulfilled in Jeſus Chriſt.

Mr. ADDISON, ſo deſervedly celebrated for an uncommon accuracy in thinking and reaſoning, has given abundant proof of his

firm

firm belief of Chriſtianity, and his zeal againſt Infidels of all kinds, in the writings that are here publiſhed; of which it is certainly known, that a great part of them were his own compoſitions.

I mention not theſe great names, nor the teſtimonies they have given of their firm belief of the truth of Chriſtianity, as if the evidences of our religion were to be finally reſolved into human authority, or tried in any other way than by the known and eſtabliſhed rules of right reaſon; but my deſign in mentioning them, is,

1. To ſhew the very great aſſurance of thoſe who would make the belief of revelation inconſiſtent with the due uſe of our reaſon; when they have known ſo many eminent inſtances, in our own time, of the greateſt maſters of reaſon not only believing revelation, but zealouſly concerned to eſtabliſh and propagate the belief of it.

2. The remembrance of this will alſo be a means, on one hand, to hinder well meaning people from being miſled by the vain boaſts of our modern pretenders to reaſon; and, on the other hand, to check the inclination of the wicked and vicious to be miſled, when both of them have before their eyes ſuch freſh and eminent inſtances of ſound reaſoning and a firm faith joined together in one and the ſame mind.

3. Further, as theſe were perſons generally eſteemed for virtue and goodneſs, and, notwithſtanding their high attainments, remarkable for their modeſty and humility; their examples ſhew us, that a ſtrong and clear reaſon naturally leads to the belief of revelation, when it is not under the influences of vice, or pride.

4. And, finally, as they are all Laymen, there is no room for the enemies of revealed religion to alledge, that they were prejudiced by intereſt, or ſecular conſiderations of any kind. A ſuggeſtion, that has really no weight, when urged againſt the writings of the clergy in defence of revelation, ſince they do not deſire to be truſted upon their own authority, but upon the reaſons they offer; and Lawyers and Phyſicians are not leſs truſted, becauſe they live by their profeſſions; but it is a ſuggeſtion that eaſily takes hold of weak minds, and eſpecially ſuch as catch at objections, and are willing to be caught by them. And, conſidering the diligence of the adverſary in making proſelytes, and drawing men from the faith of Chriſt; equal diligence is required of thoſe who are to maintain that faith, not only to leave men no real ground, but even no colour or pretence, for their infidelity.

The following diſcourſes, except that concerning the Evidences of the Chriſtian Religion, were all publiſhed in ſeparate papers

pers ſome years ago, and afterwards collected into volumes, with marks of diſtinction at the end of many of them, to point out the writers. Mr. ADDISON's are there diſtinguiſhed by ſome one of the letters of the word CLIO; and the ſame marks of diſtinction are here continued; as are alſo the reſt, where any letter was found at the end of the diſcourſe.

In thoſe volumes, they ſtand according to the order of time in which they were at firſt ſeparately publiſhed, without any connexion as to the matters contained in them; but here, the ſeveral diſcourſes on the ſame ſubject, which ly diſperſed in thoſe papers, are reduced to their proper heads, and put into one view, that the whole may be more regularly read, and each head may leave a more laſting impreſſion upon the mind of the Reader.

*** Mr. ADDISON *having left his Treatiſe on the truth of the Chriſtian Religion unfiniſhed, the Publiſher, to make it ſomewhat more compleat, ſelected, from the* Spectator, *ſeveral papers (moſtly the Author's) on the being and perfections of God, the nature of Religion, the immortality of the Soul, and a Future State; and printed them with it. But, though the treatiſe and the other papers are well calculated to prove the truth of, and recommend the Chriſtian Religion to the faith and practice of mankind; yet their influence will be but ſmall, till men are awakened out of that inſenſibility into which they are fallen; and brought to believe how much they are intereſted in the great truths Chriſtianity reveals. To beget thought and excite inquiry, it was judged the following extract from* Monſ. Paſcal's Thoughts, *againſt an atheiſtical indifference, would neither be an improper, nor an unacceptable introduction to the ſubſequent papers.*

INTRODUCTION.

" IT were to be wiſhed, that the enemies of religion would at leaſt bring themſelves to apprehend its nature, before they oppos'd its authority. Did religion make its boaſt of beholding GOD with a clear and perfect view, and of poſſeſſing him without covering or veil, the argument would bear ſome colour, when men ſhould alledge, that none of the things about them do indeed afford this pretended evidence, and this degree of light. But ſince religion, on the contrary, repreſents men as in a ſtate of darkneſs, and of eſtrangement from GOD; ſince it affirms him to have withdrawn himſelf from their diſcovery, and to have choſen, in his word, the very ſtyle and appellation of *Deus abſconditus*; laſtly,

" ſince

" ſince it employs itſelf alike, in eſtabliſhing theſe " two maxims, That GOD has left in his church " certain characters of himſelf, by which they who " ſincerely ſeek him ſhall not fail of a ſenſible " conviction; and yet, That he has, at the ſame " time, ſo far ſhaded and obſcured theſe characters " as to render them imperceptible to thoſe who " do not ſeek him with their whole heart; what " advantage is it to men, who profeſs themſelves " negligent in the ſearch of truth, to complain ſo " frequently that nothing reveals and diſplays it to " them? For this very obſcurity under which they " labour, and which they make an exception a- " gainſt the church, does itſelf evince one of " the two grand points which the church main- " tains, (without affecting the other); and is ſo " far from overthrowing its doctrines, as to lend " them a manifeſt confirmation and ſupport.

" IF they would give their objections any " ſtrength, they ought to urge, that they have ap- " plied their utmoſt endeavour, and have uſed all " means of information, even thoſe which the " church recommends, without ſatisfaction. Did " they expreſs themſelves thus, they would indeed " attack religion in one of its chief pretenſions. " But I hope to ſhew, in the following papers, that " no rational perſon can ſpeak after this manner, " and I dare aſſert that none ever did. We know " very well how men, under this indifferency of " ſpirit, behave themſelves in the caſe. They " ſuppoſe themſelves to have made the mightieſt " effort towards the inſtruction of their minds, " when they have ſpent ſome hours in reading the " ſcriptures, and have aſked ſome queſtions of a " clergyman concerning the articles of faith. " When this is done, they declare to all the " world, that they have conſulted books and men

" without

" without ſucceſs. I ſhall be excuſed if I refrain " not from telling ſuch men, (what I have often " told them) that this neglect of theirs is inſup- " portable. 'Tis not a foreign or a petty intereſt " which is here in debate: we are ourſelves the " parties, and all our hopes and fortunes are the " depending ſtake."

" THE immortality of the ſoul is a thing " which ſo deeply concerns, ſo infinitely im- " ports us, that we muſt have utterly loſt our " feeling, to be altogether cold and remiſs in our " inquiries about it. And all our actions, or de- " ſigns, ought to bend ſo very different a way, " according as we are either encouraged or forbid- " den to embrace the hope of eternal rewards; that " 'tis impoſſible for us to proceed with judgment " and diſcretion, otherwiſe than as we keep this " point always in view, which ought to be our ru- " ling object and final aim.

" THUS is it our higheſt intereſt, no leſs than " our principal duty, to get light into a ſubject on " which our whole conduct depends. And there- " fore, in the number of wavering and unſatiſ- " fied men, I make the greateſt difference imagi- " nable between thoſe who labour with all their " force to obtain inſtruction, and thoſe who live " without giving themſelves any trouble, or ſo " much as any thought, in this affair.

" I cannot but be touched with a hearty com- " paſſion for thoſe who ſincerely grone under this " diſſatisfaction; who look upon it as the greateſt " of misfortunes, and who ſpare no pains to deli- " ver themſelves from it, by making theſe reſearch- " es their chief employment and moſt ſerious ſtudy. " But as for thoſe who paſs their life without re- " flecting on its iſſue, and who, for this reaſon a- " lone, becauſe they find not in themſelves a con-

" vincing

" vincing teſtimony, refuſe to ſeek it elſewhere,
" and to examine to the bottom, whether the opi-
" nion propos'd be ſuch as we are wont to enter-
" tain by popular ſimplicity and credulity, or ſuch,
" as though obſcure in itſelf, yet is built on ſolid
" and immoveable foundations, I conſider them
" after quite another manner. The careleſſneſs
" which they betray in an affair where their perſon,
" their intereſt, their whole eternity is embark'd,
" rather provokes my reſentment than engages my
" pity: nay, it ſtrikes me with amazement and a-
" ſtoniſhment; 'tis a monſter to my apprehenſion.
" I ſpeak not this as tranſported with the pious zeal
" of a ſpiritual and rapturous devotion. On the
" contrary, I affirm, that the love of ourſelves,
" the intereſt of mankind, and the moſt ſimple
" and artleſs reaſon do naturally inſpire us with
" theſe ſentiments; and that to ſee thus far, is not
" to exceed the ſphere of unrefined, uneducated
" men.

" It requires no great elevation of ſoul to ob-
" ſerve, that nothing in this world is productive
" of true contentment; that our pleaſures are
" vain and fugitive, our troubles innumerable and
" perpetual; and that, after all, death, which
" threatens us every moment, muſt in the compaſs
" of a few years, (perhaps of a few days) put us
" into the eternal condition, of *Happineſs*, or *Mi-
" ſery*, or *Nothing*. Between us and theſe three
" great periods, or ſtates, no barrier is interpoſed but
" life, the moſt brittle thing in all nature: and the
" happineſs of heaven being certainly not deſigned
" for thoſe who doubt whether they have an im-
" mortal part to enjoy it, ſuch perſons have no-
" thing left but the miſerable chance of annihilati-
" on, or of hell.

" There

" THERE is not any reflexion which can " have more reality than this, as there is none " which has greater terror. Let us ſet the braveſt " face on our condition, and play the heroes as " artfully as we can, yet ſee here the iſſue which " attends the goodlieſt life upon earth!

" 'TIS in vain for men to turn aſide their " thoughts from this eternity which awaits them, " as if they were able to deſtroy it, by denying it " a place in their imagination. It ſubſiſts in " ſpite of *them*; it advanceth unobſerv'd; and " death, which is to draw the curtain from it, will, " in a ſhort time, infallibly reduce them to the " dreadful neceſſity of being for ever nothing, or " for ever miſerable.

" WE have here a doubt of the moſt affright- " ing conſequence, and which therefore to enter- " tain may be well eſteemed the moſt grievous of " misfortunes: but, at the ſame time, 'tis our in- " diſpenſable duty not to ly under it, without ſtrug- " gling for deliverance.

" HE then who doubts, and yet ſeeks not to " be reſolved, is equally unhappy and unjuſt. But " if, withal, he appears eaſy and compoſed; if he " freely declares his indifference; nay, if he takes " a vanity in profeſſing it, and ſeems to make this " moſt deplorable condition the ſubject of his " pleaſure and joy, I have not words to fix a name " on ſo extravagant a creature. Where's the very " poſſibility of entering into theſe thoughts and re- " ſolutions? what delight is there in expecting mi- " ſery without end? what vanity in finding one's " ſelf encompaſſed with impenetrable darkneſs? or " what conſolation in deſpairing for ever of a com- " forter?

" To ſit down with ſome ſort of acquieſcence " under ſo fatal an ignorance, is a thing unaccount-

" able

" able beyond all expreſſion; and they who live
" with ſuch a diſpoſition ought to be made ſenſible
" of its abſurdity and ſtupidity, by having their in-
" ward reflexions laid open to them, that they
" may grow wiſe by the proſpect of their own fol-
" ly. For, behold how men are wont to reaſon,
" while they obſtinately remain thus ignorant of
" what they are, and refuſe all methods of inſtru-
" ction and illumination!

" WHO has ſent me into the world, I know
" not; what the world is, I know not, nor what
" I am myſelf. I am under an aſtoniſhing and ter-
" rifying ignorance of all things. I know not
" what my body is, what my ſenſes, or my ſoul.
" This very part of me which thinks what I ſpeak,
" which reflects upon every thing elſe, and even
" upon itſelf, yet is as mere a ſtranger to its own
" nature as the dulleſt thing I carry about me. I
" behold theſe frightful ſpaces of the univerſe with
" which I am encompaſſed; and I find myſelf
" chained to one little corner of the vaſt extent,
" without underſtanding why I am placed in this
" ſeat, rather than in any other; or why this moment
" of time, given me to live, was aſſigned rather
" at ſuch a point, than at any other of the whole
" eternity which was before me, or of all that
" which is to come after me. I ſee nothing but
" infinities on all ſides, which devour and ſwallow
" me up, like an atom; or like a ſhadow, which
" endures but a ſingle inſtant, and is never to re-
" turn. The ſum of my knowledge is, that I
" muſt ſhortly die: but that which I am moſt ig-
" norant of, is this very death which I feel myſelf
" unable to decline.

" As I know not whence I came, ſo I know
" not whither I go: only this I know, that, at
" my departure out of the world, I muſt either

" fall for ever into nothing, or into the hands of an " incenſed GOD, without being capable of deci- " ding which of theſe two conditions ſhall eternal- " ly be my portion. Such is my ſtate; full of " weakneſs, obſcurity, and wretchedneſs. And " from all this I conclude, that I ought, therefore, " to paſs all the days of my life, without conſider- " ing what is hereafter to befal me; and that I " have nothing to do but to follow my inclinations, " without reflexion or diſquiet, in doing all that " which, if what men ſay of a miſerable eternity " prove true, will infallibly plunge me into it. " 'Tis poſſible I might find ſome light to clear up " my doubts; but I ſhall not take a minute's pains, " nor ſtir one foot in the ſearch of it. On the " contrary, I am reſolved to treat thoſe with ſcorn " and deriſion who labour in this inquiry and care; " and ſo to run, without fear or foreſight, upon " the trial of the grand event; permitting myſelf " to be led ſoftly on to death, utterly uncertain as " to the eternal iſſue of my future condition.

" IN earneſt, 'tis a glory to religion to have ſo " unreaſonable men for its profeſs'd enemies; and " their oppoſition is of ſo little danger, that it " ſerves to illuſtrate the principal truths which our " religion teaches. For the main ſcope of *Chriſti-* " *an* faith is to eſtabliſh theſe two principles, the " corruption of nature, and the redemption by " *Jeſus Chriſt*. And theſe oppoſers, if they are of " no uſe towards demonſtrating the truth of the " redemption, by the ſanctity of their lives, yet " are, at leaſt, admirably uſeful in ſhewing the cor- " ruption of nature, by ſo unnatural ſentiments " and ſuggeſtions.

" NOTHING is ſo important to any man as " his own eſtate and condition; nothing ſo great, " ſo amazing, as eternity. If therefore we find

" perſons

" perſons indifferent to the loſs of their being, and " to the danger of endleſs miſery, 'tis impoſſible " that this temper ſhould be natural. They are " quite other men in all other regards: they fear " the ſmalleſt inconveniencies; they ſee them as " they approach, and feel them if they arrive; " and he who paſſeth days and nights in chagrin " or deſpair, for the loſs of an employment, or for " ſome imaginary blemiſh in his honour, is the very " ſame mortal who knows that he muſt loſe all by " death, and yet remains without diſquiet, reſent- " ment or emotion. This wonderful inſenſibility " with reſpect to things of the moſt fatal conſe- " quence, in a heart ſo nicely ſenſible of the mean- " eſt trifles, is an aſtoniſhing prodigy, an unintelli- " gible inchantment, a ſupernatural blindneſs " and infatuation.

" A man in a cloſe dungeon, who knows not " whether ſentence of death is paſſed upon him, " who is allowed but one hour's ſpace to inform " himſelf concerning it, and that one hour ſuffici- " ent, in caſe it have paſſed, to obtain its reverſe, " would act contrary to nature and ſenſe, ſhould " he make uſe of this hour not to procure informa- " tion, but to purſue his vanity or ſport. And yet " ſuch is the condition of the perſons whom we are " now deſcribing: only with this difference, that " the evils with which they are every moment " threatened do infinitely ſurpaſs the bare loſs of " life, and that tranſient puniſhment which the " priſoner is ſuppoſed to apprehend. Yet they run " thoughtleſs upon the precipice, having only caſt " a vail over their eyes, to hinder them from diſ- " cerning it, and divert themſelves with the offici- " ouſneſs of ſuch as charitably warn them of their " danger.

" THUS, not the zeal alone of thoſe who " heartily ſeek GOD demonſtrates the truth of re- " ligion, but likewiſe the blindneſs of thoſe who " utterly forbear to ſeek him, and who paſs their " days under ſo horrible a neglect. There muſt " needs be a ſtrange turn and revolution in human " nature, before men can ſubmit to ſuch a conditi- " on; much more, e'er they can applaud and va- " lue themſelves upon it. For, ſuppoſing them to " have obtained an abſolute certainty that there " was no fear after death, but of falling into no- " thing; ought not this to be the ſubject rather of " deſpair than of jollity? And is it not therefore " the higheſt pitch of ſenſeleſs extravagance, while " we want this certainty, to glory in our doubt and " diſtruſt?

" AND yet, after all, it is too viſible, that " man has ſo far declined from his original nature, " and as it were departed from himſelf, as to nou- " riſh in his heart a ſecret ſeed-plot of joy, ſpring- " ing up from theſe libertine reflexions. This bru- " tal eaſe or indolence, between the fear of hell " and of annihilation, carries ſomewhat ſo tempt- " ing in it, that not only thoſe who have the miſ- " fortune to be ſceptically inclined, but even thoſe " who cannot unſettle their judgment, do yet e- " ſteem it reputable to take up even a counterfeit " diffidence. For we may obſerve the largeſt part " of the herd to be of this latter kind, falſe pretend- " ers to infidelity, and mere hypocrites in atheiſm. " There are perſons whom we have heard declare " that the genteel way of the world conſiſts in thus " acting the bravo. This is that which they term " *throwing off the yoke*, and which the greater num- " ber of them profeſs, not ſo much out of opinion, " as out of gallantry and complaiſance.

" YET,

" YET, if they have the leaſt reſerve of com-
" mon ſenſe, it will not be difficult to make them
" apprehend, how miſerably they abuſe themſelves,
" by laying ſo falſe a foundation of applauſe and
" eſteem. For this is not the way to raiſe a chara-
" cter, even with worldly men, who as they are
" able to paſs a ſhrewd judgment on things, ſo
" they eaſily diſcern, that the only method of ſuc-
" ceeding in our temporal affairs is to approve our-
" ſelves honeſt, faithful, prudent, and capable of
" advancing the intereſt of our friends; becauſe
" men naturally love nothing but that which ſome
" way contributes to their uſe and benefit. But now
" what benefit can we any way derive from hearing
" a man confeſs, that he has eaſed himſelf of the
" burden of religion; that he believes no GOD,
" as the witneſs and inſpector of his conduct; that
" he conſiders himſelf as abſolute maſter of what he
" does, and accountable for it only to his own
" mind? Will he fancy that we ſhall be hence in-
" duced to repoſe a greater degree of confidence in
" him hereafter, or to depend on his comfort, his
" advice or aſſiſtance, in the neceſſities of life?
" Can he imagine us to take any great delight or
" complacency, when he tells us, that he doubts
" whether our very ſoul be any thing more than a
" little wind and ſmoke; nay, when he tells it us,
" with an air of aſſurance, and a voice that teſti-
" fies the contentment of his heart? Is this a thing
" to be ſpoken of with pleaſantry? or ought it not
" rather to be lamented with the deepeſt ſadneſs,
" as the moſt melancholic reflexion that can ſtrike
" our thoughts!

" IF they would compoſe themſelves to ſerious
" conſideration, they muſt perceive the method in
" which they are engaged to be ſo very ill choſen,
" ſo repugnant to gentility, and ſo remote even

" from that good air and grace which they purſue, " that, on the contrary, nothing can more effect- " ually expoſe them to the contempt and averſion " of mankind, or mark them out for perſons de- " fective in parts and judgment. And indeed " ſhould we demand from them an account of their " ſentiments, and of the reaſons which they have " to entertain this ſuſpicion in religious matters, " what they offered would appear ſo miſerably " weak and trifling, as rather to confirm us in " our belief. This is no more than what one of " their own fraternity told them with great ſmart- " neſs, on ſuch an occaſion, *If you continue* (ſays " he) *to diſpute at this rate, you'll infallibly make me* " *a Chriſtian.* And the Gentleman was in the " right: for who would not tremble to find himſelf " embarked in the ſame cauſe with ſo forlorn, ſo " deſpicable companions.

" AND thus it is evident, that they who wear " no more than the outward maſk of theſe principles " are the moſt unhappy counterfeits in the world; " in as much as they are obliged to put a continual " force and conſtraint on their genius, only that " they may render themſelves the moſt impertinent " of all men living.

" IF they are heartily and ſincerely troubled at " their want of light, let them not diſſemble the " diſeaſe. Such a confeſſion could not be reputed " ſhameful; for there is really no ſhame, but in " being ſhameleſs. Nothing betrays ſo much " weakneſs of ſoul, as not to apprehend the miſery " of man, while living *without* GOD *in the world:* " nothing is a ſurer token of extreme baſeneſs of " ſpirit, than not to hope for the reality of eternal " promiſes: no man is ſo ſtigmatized a coward, " as he that acts the bravo againſt heaven. Let " them, therefore, leave theſe impieties to thoſe

" who

" who are born with ſo unhappy a judgment as to
" be capable of entertaining them in earneſt. If
" they cannot be *Chriſtian men*, let them however
" be *men of honour*. And let them, in concluſion,
" acknowledge that there are but two ſorts of per-
" ſons who deſerve to be ſtyled reaſonable, either
" thoſe who ſerve GOD with all their heart, be-
" cauſe they know him; or thoſe who ſeek him
" with all their heart, becauſe as yet they know
" him not.

" IF then there are perſons who ſincerely inquire
" after GOD, and who, being truly ſenſible of
" their miſery, affectionately deſire to be reſcued
" from it, it is to theſe alone that we can in juſtice
" afford our labour and ſervice, for their direction
" in finding out that light of which they feel the
" want.

" BUT as for thoſe who live without either
" knowing GOD, or endeavouring to know him,
" they look on themſelves as ſo little deſerving
" their own care, that they cannot but be unwor-
" thy the care of others: and it requires all the
" charity of the religion which they deſpiſe, not to
" deſpiſe *them* to ſuch a degree, as even to aban-
" don them to their own folly. But ſince the ſame
" religion obliges us to conſider them, while they
" remain in this life, as ſtill capable of GOD's en-
" lightening grace; and to acknowledge it as very
" poſſible, that, in the courſe of a few days, they
" may be repleniſh'd with a fuller meaſure of faith
" than we now enjoy, and we ourſelves, on the o-
" ther ſide, fall into the depths of their preſent
" blindneſs and miſery; we ought to do for them
" what we deſire ſhould be done to us in their caſe,
" to intreat them that they would take pity on them-
" ſelves, and would, at leaſt, advance a ſtep or
" two forward, if perchance they may come into
" the

" the light. For which end it is wiſhed, that they
" would employ, in the peruſal of this piece, ſome
" few of theſe hours which they ſpend ſo unprofit-
" ably in other purſuits. 'Tis poſſible they may
" gain ſomewhat by the reading; at leaſt they can-
" not be great loſers. But if any ſhall apply them-
" ſelves to it, with perfect ſincerity, and with an
" unfeigned deſire of knowing the truth, I deſpair
" not of *their* ſatisfaction, or of their being con-
" vinc'd by ſo many proofs of our divine religion
" as they will here find laid together. *

THE

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THE

THE EVIDENCES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

SECTION I.

I. *General diviſion of the following diſcourſe, with regard to* Pagan *and* Jewiſh *authors, who mention particulars relating to our Saviour.*
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V. *Beſides that, no* Pagan *writers of that age lived in* Judea *or its confines.*
VI. *And becauſe many books of that age are loſt.*
VII. *An inſtance of one record proved to be authentic.*
VIII. *A ſecond record of probable, though not undoubted, authority.*

I. THAT I may lay before you a full ſtate of the ſubject under our conſideration, and methodize the ſeveral particulars that I touched upon in diſcourſe with you; I ſhall firſt take notice of ſuch Pagan authors as

as have given their teſtimony to the hiſtory of our Saviour; reduce theſe authors under their reſpective claſſes, and ſhew what authority their teſtimonies carry with them. Secondly, I ſhall take notice of * Jewiſh authors in the ſame light.

II. There are many reaſons, why you ſhould not expect that matters of ſuch a wonderful nature ſhould be taken notice of by thoſe eminent Pagan writers, who were contemporaries with Jeſus Chriſt, or by thoſe who lived before his diſciples had perſonally appeared among them, and aſcertained the report which had gone abroad concerning a life ſo full of miracles.

Suppoſing ſuch things had happened at this day in Switzerland, or among the Griſons, who make a greater figure in Europe than Judea did in the Roman empire, would they be immediately believed by thoſe who live at a great diſtance from them? or would any certain account of them be tranſmitted into foreign countries, within ſo ſhort a ſpace of time as that of our Saviour's publick miniſtry? Such kinds of news, though never ſo true, ſeldom gain credit, till ſometime after they are tranſacted, and expoſed to the examination of the curious, who, by laying together circumſtances, atteſtations, and characters of thoſe who are concerned in them, either receive, or reject what at firſt none but eye-witneſſes could abſolutely believe or diſbelieve. In a caſe of this ſort, it was natural for men of ſenſe and learning to treat the whole account as fabulous; or, at fartheſt, to ſuſpend their belief of it, until all things ſtood together in their full light.

III. Beſides, the Jews were branded not only for ſuperſtitions different from all the religions of the Pagan world, but in a particular manner ridiculed for being a credulous People; ſo that whatever

* *The author did not live to write this ſecond part.*

ever reports of ſuch a nature came out of that country, were looked upon by the Heathen world as falſe, frivolous, and improbable.

IV. We may further obſerve, that the ordinary practice of magic in thoſe times, with the many pretended prodigies, divinations, apparitions, and local miracles among the Heathens, made them leſs attentive to ſuch news from Judea, till they had time to conſider the nature, the occaſion, and the end of our Saviour's miracles, and were awakened by many ſurpriſing events, to allow them any conſideration at all.

V. We are indeed told by St. Matthew, that the fame of our Saviour, during his life, went throughout all Syria, and that there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, Judea, Decapolis, Idumæa, from beyond Jordan, and from Tyre and Sidon. Now, had there been any hiſtorians of thoſe times and places, we might have expected to have ſeen in them ſome account of thoſe wonderful tranſactions in Judea; but there is not any ſingle author extant, in any kind, of that age, in any of thoſe countries.

VI. How many books have periſhed in which poſſibly there might have been mention of our Saviour? Look among the Romans, how few of their writings are come down to our times? In the ſpace of two hundred years from our Saviour's birth, when there was ſuch a multitude of writers in all kinds, how ſmall is the number of authors that have made their way to the preſent age?

VII. One authentick record, and that the moſt authentick Heathen record, we are pretty ſure is loſt. I mean the account ſent by the governor of Judea, under whom our Saviour was judged, condemned, and crucified. It was the cuſtom in the Roman empire, as it is to this day in all the governments of

the world, for the prefects and viceroys of diſtant provinces to tranſmit to their ſovereign a ſummary relation of every thing remarkable in their adminiſtration. That Pontius Pilate, in his account, would have touched on ſo extraordinary an event in Judea, is not to be doubted; and that he actually did, we learn from Juſtin Martyr, who lived about a hundred years after our Saviour's death, reſided, made converts, and ſuffered martyrdom at Rome, where he was engaged with philoſophers, and in a particular manner with Creſcens the Cynick, who could eaſily have detected, and would not fail to have expoſed him, had he quoted a record not in being, or made any falſe citation out of it. Would the great apologiſt have challenged Creſcens to diſpute the cauſe of Chriſtianity with him before the Roman ſenate, had he forged ſuch an evidence? or would Creſcens have refuſed the challenge, could he have triumphed over him in the detection of ſuch a forgery? To which we muſt add, that the apology, which appeals to this record, was preſented to a learned Emperor, and to the whole body of the Roman ſenate. This father, in his apology, ſpeaking of the death and ſuffering of our Saviour, refers the Emperor for the truth of what he ſays to the acts of Pontius Pilate, which I have here mentioned. Tertullian, who wrote his apology about fifty years after Juſtin, doubtleſs referred to the ſame record, when he tells the governor of Rome, that the Emperor Tiberius having received an account out of Paleſtine in Syria of the divine perſon, who had appeared in that country, paid him a particular regard, and threatened to puniſh any who ſhould accuſe the Chriſtians nay, that the Emperor would have adopted him among the deities whom they worſhipped, had not the ſenate refuſed to come in to his propoſal. Tertullian, who gives

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us this hiſtory, was not only one of the moſt learned men of his age, but, what adds a greater weight to his authority in this caſe, was eminently ſkilful and well read in the laws of the Roman empire. Nor can it be ſaid, that Tertullian grounded his quotation upon the authority of Juſtin Martyr, becauſe we find he mixes it with matters of fact which are not related by that author. Euſebius mentions the ſame antient record, but as it was not extant in his time, I ſhall not inſiſt upon his authority in this point. If it be objected that this particular is not mentioned in any Roman hiſtorian, I ſhall uſe the ſame argument in a parallel caſe, and ſee whether it will carry any force with it. Ulpian the great Roman lawyer gathered together all the imperial edicts that had been made againſt the Chriſtians; but did any one ever ſay that there had been no ſuch edicts, becauſe they were not mentioned in the hiſtories of thoſe Emperors? Beſides, who knows but this circumſtance of Tiberius was mentioned in other hiſtorians that have been loſt, though not to be found in any ſtill extant? Has not Suetonius many particulars of this Emperor omitted by Tacitus, and Herodian many that are not ſo much as hinted at by either? As for the ſpurious acts of Pilate, now extant, we know the occaſion and time of their writing, and had there not been a true and authentic record of this nature, they would never have been forged.

VIII. The ſtory of Abgarus king of Edeſſa, relating to the letter which he ſent to our Saviour, and to that which he received from him, is a record of great authority; and though I will not inſiſt upon it, may venture to ſay, that had we ſuch an evidence for any fact in Pagan hiſtory, an author would be thought very unreaſonable who ſhould reject it. I believe you will be of my opinion, if you

will peruſe, with other authors who have appeared in vindication of theſe letters as genuine, the additional arguments which have been made uſe of by the late famous and learned Dr. Grabe, in the ſecond volume of his *Spicilegium*.

SECTION II.

I. *What facts in the hiſtory of our Saviour might be taken notice of by* Pagan *authors.*
II. *What particular facts are taken notice of, and by what* Pagan *authors.*
III. *How* Celſus *repreſented our Saviour's miracles.*
IV. *The ſame repreſentation made of them by other unbelievers, and proved unreaſonable.*
V. *What facts in our Saviour's hiſtory not to be expected from* Pagan *writers.*

I. WE now come to conſider what undoubted authorities are extant among Pagan writers; and here we muſt premiſe, that ſome parts of our Saviour's hiſtory may be reaſonably expected from Pagans. I mean ſuch parts as might be known to thoſe who lived at a diſtance from Judea, as well as to thoſe who were the followers and eye-witneſſes of Chriſt.

II. Such particulars are moſt of theſe which follow, and which are all atteſted by ſome one or other of thoſe Heathen authors, who lived in or near the age of our Saviour and his diſciples. "That "Auguſtus Cæſar had ordered the whole empire "to be cenſed or taxed," which brought our Saviour's reputed parents to Bethlehem: This is mentioned by ſeveral Roman hiſtorians, as Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dion. "That a great light, "or a new ſtar appeared in the eaſt, which di-

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" rected the wiſe men to our Saviour:" This is recorded by Chalcidius. " That Herod, the king " of Paleſtine, ſo often mentioned in the Roman " hiſtory, made a great ſlaughter of innocent chil- " dren," being ſo jealous of his ſucceſſor, that he put to death his own ſons on that account: This character of him is given by ſeveral hiſtorians, and this cruel fact mentioned by Macrobius, a Heathen author, who tells it as a known thing, without any mark or doubt upon it. " That our Saviour had " been in Egypt:" This, Celſus, though he raiſes a monſtrous ſtory upon it, is ſo far from denying, that he tells us our Saviour learned the arts of magic in that country. " That Pontius Pilate was " Governor of Judea; That our Saviour was " brought in judgment before him, and by him " condemned and crucified:" This is recorded by Tacitus. " That many miraculous cures and " works, out of the ordinary courſe of nature, " were wrought by him:" This is confeſſed by Julian the apoſtate, Porphyry, and Hierocles, all of them not only Pagans, but profeſſed enemies and perſecutors of Chriſtianity. " That our Saviour " foretold ſeveral things which came to paſs ac- " cording to his predictions:" This was atteſted by Phlegon in his annals, as we are aſſured by the learned Origen againſt Celſus. " That at the time " when our Saviour died, there was a miraculous " darkneſs and a great earthquake:" This is recorded by the ſame Phlegon the Trallian, who was likewiſe a Pagan, and freeman to Adrian the Emperor. We may here obſerve, that a native of Trallium, which was not ſituate at ſo great a diſtance from Paleſtine, might very probably be informed of ſuch remarkable events as had paſſed among the Jews in the age immediately preceding his own times, ſince ſeveral of his countrymen

with whom he had converſed, might have received a confuſed report of our Saviour before his crucifixion, and probably lived within the ſhake of the earthquake, and the ſhadow of the eclipſe, which are recorded by this author. "That Chriſt was "worſhipped as a God among the Chriſtians; "that they would rather ſuffer death than blaſ-"pheme him; that they received a ſacrament, and "by it entered into a vow of abſtaining from ſin "and wickedneſs," conformable to the advice given by St. Paul: "That they had private aſſemblies "of worſhip, and uſed to join together in hymns:" This is the account which Pliny the younger gives of Chriſtianity in his days, about ſeventy years after the death of Chriſt, and which agrees in all its circumſtances with the accounts we have in holy writ, of the firſt ſtate of Chriſtianity after the crucifixion of our bleſſed Saviour. "That St. Peter, whoſe "miracles are many of them recorded in holy "writ, did many wonderful works," is owned by Julian the apoſtate, who therefore repreſents him as a great magician, and one who had in his poſſeſſion a book of magical ſecrets, left him by our Saviour. "That the devils or evil ſpirits were ſub-"ject to them," we may learn from Porphyry, who objects to Chriſtianity, that ſince Jeſus had begun to be worſhipped, Æſculapius and the reſt of the gods did no more converſe with men. Nay, Celſus himſelf affirms the ſame thing in effect, when he ſays, that the power which ſeemed to reſide in Chriſtians, proceeded from the uſe of certain names, and the invocation of certain dæmons. Origen remarks on this paſſage, that the author doubtleſs hints at thoſe Chriſtians who put to flight evil ſpirits, and healed thoſe who were poſſeſſed with them; a fact which had been often ſeen, and which he himſelf had ſeen, as he declares in another part

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of his diſcourſe againſt *Celſus*. But at the ſame time he aſſures us, that this miraculous power was exerted by the uſe of no other name but that of Jeſus, to which were added ſeveral paſſages in his hiſtory, but nothing like any invocation to dæmons.

III. Celſus was ſo hard ſet with the report of our Saviour's miracles, and the confident atteſtations concerning him, that though he often intimates he did not believe them to be true, yet knowing he might be ſilenced in ſuch an anſwer, provides himſelf with another retreat, when beaten out of this, namely, that our Saviour was a magician. Thus he compares the feeding of ſo many thouſands, at two different times, with a few loaves and fiſhes, to the magical feaſts of thoſe Egyptian impoſtors, who would preſent their ſpectators with viſionary entertainments that had in them neither ſubſtance nor reality: which, by the way, is to ſuppoſe, that a hungry and fainting multitude were filled by an apparition, or ſtrengthened and refreſhed with ſhadows. He knew very well that there were ſo many witneſſes and actors, if I may call them ſuch, in theſe two miracles, that it was impoſſible to refute ſuch multitudes, who had doubtleſs ſufficiently ſpread the fame of them, and was therefore in this place forced to reſort to the other ſolution, that it was done by magic. It was not enough to ſay, that a miracle, which appeared to ſo many thouſand eye-witneſſes, was a forgery of Chriſt's diſciples; and therefore ſuppoſing them to be eye-witneſſes, he endeavours to ſhew how they might be deceived.

IV. The unconverted Heathens who were preſſed by the many authorities that confirmed our Saviour's miracles, as well as the unbelieving Jews, who had actually ſeen them, were driven to account for them after the ſame manner: for, to work

work by magic, in the Heathen way of ſpeaking, was, in the language of the Jews, to caſt out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. Our Saviour, who knew that unbelievers, in all ages, would put this perverſe interpretation on his miracles, has branded the malignity of thoſe men, who, contrary to the dictates of their own hearts, ſtarted ſuch an unreaſonable objection, as a blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and declared not only the guilt, but the puniſhment of ſo black a crime. At the ſame time he condeſcended to ſhew the vanity and emptineſs of this objection againſt his miracles, by repreſenting that they evidently tended to the deſtruction of thoſe powers, to whoſe aſſiſtance the enemies of his doctrine then aſcribed them. An argument, which if duly weighed, renders the objection ſo very frivolous and groundleſs, that we may venture to call it even blaſphemy againſt common ſenſe. Would magick endeavour to draw off the minds of men from the worſhip which was paid to ſtocks and ſtones; to give them an abhorrence of thoſe evil ſpirits who rejoiced in the moſt cruel ſacrifices, and in offerings of the greateſt impurity; and in ſhort, to call upon mankind to exert their whole ſtrength in the love and adoration of that one Being, from whom they derived exiſtence, and on whom only they were taught to depend every moment for the happineſs and continuance of it? Was it the buſineſs of magic to humanize our natures with compaſſion, forgiveneſs, and all the inſtances of the moſt extenſive charity? Would evil ſpirits contribute to make men ſober, chaſte, and temperate; and, in a word, to produce that reformation, which was wrought in the moral world by thoſe doctrines of our Saviour, that received their ſanction from his miracles? Nor is it poſſible to imagine, that evil ſpirits would enter into a combination

nation with our Saviour to cut off all their correſpondence, and intercourſe with mankind, and to prevent any for the future from addicting themſelves to thoſe rites and ceremonies, which had done them ſo much honour. We ſee the early effect which Chriſtianity had on the minds of men in this particular, by that number of books, which were filled with the ſecrets of magic, and made a ſacrifice to Chriſtianity by the converts mentioned in the Acts of the Apoſtles. We have likewiſe an eminent inſtance of the inconſiſtency of our religion with magic, in the hiſtory of the famous Aquila. This perſon, who was a kinſman of the Emperor *Trajan*, and likewiſe a man of great learning, notwithſtanding he had embraced Chriſtianity, could not be brought off from the ſtudies of magic, by the repeated admonitions of his fellow Chriſtians; ſo that at length they expelled him their ſociety, as rather chuſing to loſe the reputation of ſo conſiderable a proſelyte, than communicate with one who dealt in ſuch dark and infernal practices. Beſides, we may obſerve, that all the favourers of magic were the moſt profeſs'd and bitter enemies to the Chriſtian religion. Not to mention Simon Magus and many others, I ſhall only take notice of thoſe two great perſecutors of Chriſtianity, the Emperors Adrian and Julian the apoſtate, both of them initiated in the myſteries of divination, and ſkilled in all the depths of magic. I ſhall only add, that evil ſpirits cannot be ſuppoſed to have concurred in the eſtabliſhment of a religion, which triumphed over them, drove them out of the places they poſſeſs'd, and diveſted them of their influence on mankind; not would I mention this particular, though it be unanimouſly reported by all the antient Chriſtian authors, did it not appear from the authorities above-

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cited, that this was a fact confeſs'd by Heathens themſelves.

V. We now ſee what a multitude of Pagan teſtimonies may be produced for all thoſe remarkable paſſages, which might have been expected from them; and indeed of ſeveral, that, I believe, do more than anſwer your expectation, as they were not ſubjects in their own nature ſo expoſed to public notoriety. It cannot be expected they ſhould mention particulars, which were tranſacted amongſt the diſciples only, or among ſome few even of the diſciples themſelves; ſuch as the transfiguration, the agony in the garden, the appearance of Chriſt after his reſurrection, and others of the like nature. It was impoſſible for a Heathen author to relate theſe things; becauſe if he had believed them, he would no longer have been a Heathen, and by that means his teſtimony would not have been thought of ſo much validity. Beſides, his very report of facts ſo favourable to Chriſtianity, would have prompted men to ſay, that he was probably tainted with their doctrine. We have a parallel caſe in Hecatæus, a famous Greek hiſtorian, who had ſeveral paſſages in his book conformable to the hiſtory of the Jewiſh writers, which when quoted by Joſephus, as a confirmation of the Jewiſh hiſtory, when his Heathen adverſaries could give no other anſwer to it, they would need ſuppoſe that Hecatæus was a Jew in his heart, though they had no other reaſon for it, but becauſe his hiſtory gave greater authority to the Jewiſh than the Egyptian records.

SECTION. III.

I. *Introduction to a ſecond liſt of* Pagan *authors, who give teſtimony of our Saviour.*

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II. *A paſſage concerning our Saviour, from a learned* Athenian.
III. *His converſion from* Paganiſm *to* Chriſtianity, *makes his evidence ſtronger than if he had continued a* Pagan.
IV. *Of another* Athenian *Philoſopher converted to Chriſtianity.*
V. *Why their converſion, inſtead of weakening, ſtrengthens their evidence in defence of Chriſtianity.*
VI. *Their belief in our Saviour's hiſtory founded at firſt upon the principles of hiſtorical faith.*
VII. *Their teſtimonies extended to all the particulars of our Saviour's hiſtory,*
VIII. *As related by the four Evangeliſts.*

I. TO this liſt of Heathen writers, who make mention of our Saviour, or touch upon any patriculars of his life, I ſhall add thoſe authors who were at firſt Heathens, and afterwards converted to Chriſtianity; upon which account, as I ſhall here ſhew, their teſtimonies are to be looked upon as the more authentic. And in this liſt of evidences, I ſhall confine myſelf to ſuch learned Pagans as came over to Chriſtianity in the three firſt centuries, becauſe thoſe were the times in which men had the beſt means of informing themſelves of the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory; and becauſe, among the great number of philoſophers who came in afterwards, under the reigns of Chriſtian Emperors, there might be ſeveral who did it partly out of worldly motives.

II. Let us now ſuppoſe that a learned Heathen writer, who lived within ſixty years of our Saviour's crucifixion, after having ſhewn that falſe miracles were generally wrought in obſcurity, and before few or no witneſſes, ſpeaking of thoſe which were wrought by our Saviour, has the following paſſage. "But his works were always ſeen, becauſe they

"were

"were true; they were ſeen by thoſe who were "healed, and by thoſe who were raiſed from the "dead. Nay, theſe perſons who were thus healed, "and raiſed, were ſeen not only at the time of their "being healed, and raiſed, but long afterwards. "Nay, they were not ſeen only all the while our "Saviour was upon earth, but ſurvived after his de-"parture out of this world; nay, ſome of them "were living in our days."

III. I dare ſay you would look upon this as a glorious atteſtation for the cauſe of Chriſtianity, had it come from the hand of a famous Athenian philoſopher. Theſe forementioned words however are actually the words of one who lived about ſixty years after our Saviour's crucifixion, and was a famous philoſopher in Athens. But it will be ſaid, he was a convert to Chriſtianity: now conſider this matter impartially, and ſee if his teſtimony is not much more valid for that reaſon. Had he continued a Pagan philoſopher, would not the world have ſaid that he was not ſincere in what he writ, or did not believe it; for, if ſo, would not they have told us he would have embraced Chriſtianity? This was indeed the caſe of this excellent man; he had ſo throughly examined the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, and the excellency of that religion which he taught, and was ſo entirely convinced of both, that he became a proſelyte, and died a martyr.

IV. Ariſtides was an Athenian philoſopher, at the ſame time famed for his learning and wiſdom, but converted to Chriſtianity. As it cannot be queſtioned that he peruſed and approved the apology of Quadratus, in which is the paſſage juſt now cited, he joined with him in an apology of his own, to the ſame Emperor, on the ſame ſubject. This apology, tho' now loſt, was extant in the time of Ado Vinnenſis, *A. D.* 870, and highly eſteemed by the moſt

moſt learned Athenians, as that author witneſſes. It muſt have contained great arguments for the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, becauſe in it he aſſerted the divinity of our Saviour, which could not but engage him in the proof of his miracles.

V. I do allow, that, generally ſpeaking, a man is not ſo acceptable and unqueſtioned an evidence in facts, which make for the advancement of his own party. But we muſt conſider, that in the caſe before us, the perſons, to whom we appeal, were of an oppoſite party, till they were perſuaded of the truth of thoſe very facts, which they report. They bear evidence to a hiſtory in defence of Chriſtianity, the truth of which hiſtory was their motive to embrace Chriſtianity. They atteſt facts which they had heard while they were yet Heathens, and had they not found reaſon to believe them, they would ſtill have continued Heathens, and have made no mention of them in their writings.

VI. When a man is born under Chriſtian parents, and trained up in the profeſſion of that religion from a child, he generally guides himſelf by the rules of Chriſtian faith in believing what is delivered by the evangeliſts; but the learned Pagans of antiquity, before they became Chriſtians, were only guided by the common rules of hiſtorical faith: that is, they examined the nature of the evidence which was to be met with in common fame, tradition, and the writings of thoſe perſons who related them, together with the number, concurrence, veracity, and private characters of thoſe perſons; and being convinced upon all accounts that they had the ſame reaſon to believe the hiſtory of our Saviour, as that of any other perſon to which they themſelves were not actually eye-witneſſes, they were bound by all the rules of

hiſtorical faith, and of right reaſon, to give credit to this hiſtory. This they did accordingly, and in conſequence of it publiſhed the ſame truths themſelves, ſuffered many afflictions, and very often death itſelf, in the aſſertion of them. When I ſay, that an hiſtorical belief of the acts of our Saviour induced theſe learned Pagans to embrace his doctrine, I do not deny that there were many other motives, which conduced to it, as the excellency of his precepts, the fulfilling of prophecies, the miracles of his diſciples, the irreproachable lives and magnanimous ſufferings of their followers, with other conſiderations of the ſame nature: but whatever other collateral arguments wrought more or leſs with philoſophers of that age, it is certain, that a belief in the hiſtory of our Saviour was one motive with every new convert, and that upon which all others turned as being the very baſis and foundation of Chriſtianity.

VII. To this I muſt further add, that, as we have already ſeen many particular facts which are recorded in holy writ, atteſted by particular Pagan authors; the teſtimony of thoſe I am now going to produce, extends to the whole hiſtory of our Saviour, and to that continued ſeries of actions, which are related of him and his diſciples in the books of the New Teſtament.

VIII. This evidently appears from their quotations out of the evangeliſts, for the confirmation of any doctrine or account of our bleſſed Saviour. Nay, a learned man of our nation, who examined the writings of our moſt antient fathers, in another view, refers to ſeveral paſſages in Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens of Alexandria, Origen, and Cyprian; by which he plainly ſhews that each of theſe early writers aſcribed to the four evangeliſts by name their reſpective hiſtories; ſo that there is not the leaſt

leaſt room for doubting of their belief in the hiſtory of our Saviour, as recorded in the Goſpels. I ſhall only add, that three of the five fathers here mentioned, and probably four, were Pagans converted to Chriſtianity, as they were all of them very inquiſitive and deep in the knowledge of Heathen learning and philoſophy.

SECTION IV.

I. *Character of the times in which the Chriſtian religion was propagated.*
II. *And of many who embraced it.*
III. *Three eminent and early inſtances.*
IV. *Multitudes of learned men who came over to it.*
V. *Belief in our Saviour's hiſtory, the firſt motive to their converſion.*
VI. *The names of ſeveral* Pagan *philoſophers, who were* Chriſtian *converts.*

I. IT happened very providentially to the honour of the Chriſtian religion, that it did not take its riſe in the dark illiterate ages of the world, but at a time when arts and ſciences were at their height, and when there were men who made it the buſineſs of their lives to ſearch after truth, and ſift the ſeveral opinions of philoſophers and wiſe men, concerning the duty, the end, and chief happineſs of reaſonable creatures.

II. Several of theſe therefore, when they had informed themſelves of our Saviour's hiſtory, and examined with unprejudiced minds the doctrines and manners of his diſciples and followers, were ſo ſtruck and convinced, that they profeſſed themſelves of that ſect; notwithſtanding by this profeſſion in that juncture of time, they bid farewel to all

the pleaſures of this life, renounced all the views of ambition, engaged in an uninterrupted courſe of ſeverities, and expoſed themſelves to publick hatred and contempt, to ſufferings of all kinds, and to death itſelf.

III. Of this ſort we may reckon thoſe three early converts to Chriſtianity, who each of them was a member of a ſenate famous for its wiſdom and learning. Joſeph the Arimathean was of the Jewiſh Sanhedrim, Dionyſius of the Athenian, Areopagus, and Flavius Clemens, of the Roman ſenate; nay at the time of his death conſul of Rome. Theſe three were ſo throughly ſatisfied of the truth of the Chriſtian religion, that the firſt of them, according to all the reports of antiquity, died a martyr for it; as did the ſecond, unleſs we diſbelieve Ariſtides, his fellow-citizen and contemporary; and the third, as we are informed both by Roman and Chriſtian authors.

IV. Among thoſe innumerable multitudes, who in moſt of the known nations of the world came over to Chriſtianity at its firſt appearance, we may be ſure there were great numbers of wiſe and learned men, beſide thoſe whoſe names are in the Chriſtian records, who without doubt took care to examine the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, before they would leave the religion of their country and of their forefathers, for the ſake of one that would not only cut them off from the allurements of this world, but ſubject them to every thing terrible or diſagreeable in it. Tertullian tells the Roman governors, that their corporations, councils, armies, tribes, companies, the palace, ſenate, and courts of judicature were filled with Chriſtians; as Arnobius aſſerts, that men of the fineſt parts and learning, orators, grammarians, rhetoricians, lawyers, phyſicians, philoſophers, deſpiſing

deſpiſing the ſentiments they had been once fond of, took up their reſt in the Chriſtian religion.

V. Who can imagine that men of this character did not throughly inform themſelves of the hiſtory of that perſon whoſe doctrines they embraced? for however conſonant to reaſon his precepts appeared, how good ſoever were the effects which they produced in the world, nothing could have tempted men to acknowledge him as their God and Saviour, but their being firmly perſuaded of the miracles he wrought, and the many atteſtations of his divine miſſion, which were to be met with in the hiſtory of his life. This was the ground-work of the Chriſtian religion, and, if this failed, the whole ſuperſtructure ſunk with it. This point therefore, of the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, as recorded by the evangeliſts, is everywhere taken for granted in the writings of thoſe, who from Pagan philoſophers became Chriſtian authors, and who, by reaſon of their converſion, are to be looked upon as of the ſtrongeſt collateral teſtimony for the truth of what is delivered concerning our Saviour.

VI. Beſides innumerable authors that are loſt, we have the undoubted names, works, or fragments of ſeveral Pagan philoſophers, which ſhew them to have been as learned as any unconverted Heathen authors of the age in which they lived. If we look into the greateſt nurſeries of learning in thoſe ages of the world, we find in Athens, Dionyſius, Quadratus, Ariſtides, Athenagoras; and in Alexandria, Dionyſius, Clemens, Ammonius, and Anatolius, to whom we may add Origen; for though his father was a Chriſtian martyr, he became, without all controverſy, the moſt learned and able philoſopher of his age, by his education at Alexandria, in that famous ſeminary of arts and ſciences.

SECTION V.

I. *The learned* Pagans *had means and opportunities of informing themſelves of the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory*;
II. *From the proceedings*,
III. *The characters, ſufferings*,
IV. *And miracles of the perſons who publiſhed it.*
V. *How theſe firſt apoſtles perpetuated their tradition, by ordaining perſons to ſucceed them.*
VI. *How their ſucceſſors in the three firſt centuries preſerved their tradition.*
VII. *That five generations might derive this tradition from* Chriſt, *to the end of the third century.*
VIII. *Four eminent Chriſtians that delivered it down ſucceſſively to the year of our Lord* 254.
IX. *The faith of the four above-mentioned perſons, the ſame with that of the churches of the Eaſt, of the Weſt, and of* Egypt.
X. *Another perſon added to them, who brings us to the year* 343, *and that many other liſts might be added in as direct and ſhort a ſucceſſion.*
XI. *Why the tradition of the three firſt centuries, more authentic than that of any other age, proved from the converſation of the primitive Chriſtians.*
XII. *From the manner of initiating men into their religion.*
XIII. *From the correſpondence between the churches.*
XIV. *From the long lives of ſeveral of* Chriſt's *diſciples, of which two inſtances.*

I. IT now therefore only remains to conſider whether theſe learned men had means and opportunities of informing themſelves of the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory; for unleſs this point

point can be made out, their teſtimonies will appear invalid, and their inquiries ineffectual.

II. As to this point, we muſt conſider, that many thouſands had ſeen the tranſactions of our Saviour in Judea, and that many hundred thouſands had received an account of them from the mouths of thoſe who were actually eye-witneſſes. I ſhall only mention among theſe eye-witneſſes the twelve apoſtles, to whom we muſt add St. Paul, who had a particular call to this high office though many other diſciples and followers of Chriſt had alſo their ſhare in the publiſhing this wonderful hiſtory. We learn from the antient records of Chriſtianity, that many of the apoſtles and diſciples made it the expreſs buſineſs of their lives, travelled into the remoteſt parts of the world, and in all places gathered multitudes about them, to acquaint them with the hiſtory and doctrines of their crucified Maſter. And indeed, were all Chriſtian records of theſe proceedings entirely loſt, as many have been, the effect plainly evinces the truth of them; for how elſe during the apoſtles lives could Chriſtianity have ſpread itſelf with ſuch an amazing progreſs through the ſeveral nations of the Roman empire? how could it fly like lightning, and carry conviction with it from one end of the earth to the other?

III. Heathens therefore of every age, ſex, and quality, born in the moſt different climates, and bred up under the moſt different inſtitutions, when they ſaw men of plain ſenſe, without the help of learning, armed with patience and courage, inſtead of wealth, pomp, or power, expreſſing in their lives thoſe excellent doctrines of morality, which they taught as delivered to them from our Saviour, averring, that they had ſeen his miracles during his life, and converſed with him

him after his death; when, I ſay, they ſaw no ſuſpicion of falſhood, treachery, or worldly intereſt, in their behaviour and converſation, and that they ſubmitted to the moſt ignominious and cruel deaths, rather than retract their teſtimony, or even be ſilent in matters which they were to publiſh by their Saviour's eſpecial command, there was no reaſon to doubt of the veracity of thoſe facts which they related, or of the divine miſſion in which they were employed.

IV. But even theſe motives to faith in our Saviour would not have been ſufficient to have brought about, in ſo few years, ſuch an incredible number of converſions, had not the apoſtles been able to exhibit ſtill greater proofs of the truths which they taught. A few perſons of an odious and deſpiſed country could not have filled the world with believers, had they not ſhown undoubted credentials from the divine perſon who ſent them on ſuch a meſſage. Accordingly we are aſſured, that they were inveſted with the power of working miracles, which was the moſt ſhort and the moſt convincing argument that could be produced, and the only one that was adapted to the reaſon of all mankind, to the capacities of the wiſe and ignorant, and could overcome every cavil and every prejudice. Who would not believe that our Saviour healed the ſick, and raiſed the dead, when it was publiſhed by thoſe who themſelves often did the ſame miracles, in their preſence, and in his name? Could any reaſonable perſon imagine, that God Almighty would arm men with ſuch powers to authoriſe a lie, and eſtabliſh a religion in the world which was diſpleaſing to him, or that evil ſpirits would lend them ſuch an effectual aſſiſtance to beat down vice and idolatry?

V. When

V. When the apoſtles had formed many aſſemblies in ſeveral parts of the Pagan world, who gave credit to the glad tidings of the Goſpel, that, upon their departure, the memory of what they had related might not periſh, they appointed out of theſe new converts, men of the beſt ſenſe, and of the moſt unblemiſhed lives, to preſide over theſe ſeveral aſſemblies, and to inculcate, without ceaſing, what they had heard from the mouths of theſe eye-witneſſes.

VI. Upon the death of any of thoſe ſubſtitutes to the apoſtles and diſciples of Chriſt, his place was filled up with ſome other perſon of eminence for his piety and learning, and generally a member of the ſame church, who, after his deceaſe, was followed by another in the ſame manner; by which means the ſucceſſion was continued in an uninterrupted line. Irenæus informs us, that every church preſerved a catalogue of its biſhops in the order that they ſucceeded one another, and (for an example) produces the catalogue of thoſe who governed the church of Rome in that character, which contains eight or nine perſons, though but at a very ſmall remove from the times of the apoſtles.

Indeed the liſts of biſhops, which are come down to us in other churches, are generally filled with greater numbers than one would expect. But the ſucceſſion was quick in the three firſt centuries, becauſe the biſhop very often ended in the martyr: for when a perſecution aroſe in any place, the firſt fury of it fell upon this order of holy men, who abundantly teſtified by their deaths and ſufferings, that they did not undertake theſe offices out of any temporal views, that they were ſincere and ſatisfied in the belief of what they taught, and that they firmly adhered to what they had

had received from the apoſtles, as laying down their lives in the ſame hope, and upon the ſame principles. None can be ſuppoſed ſo utterly regardleſs of their own happineſs as to expire in torment, and hazard their eternity, to ſupport any fables and inventions of their own, or any forgeries of their predeceſſors who had preſided in the ſame church, and which might have been eaſily detected by the tradition of that particular church, as well as by the concurring teſtimony of others. To this purpoſe, I think it is very remarkable, that there was not a ſingle martyr among thoſe many heretics, who diſagreed with the apoſtolical church, and introduced ſeveral wild and abſurd notions into the doctrines of Chriſtianity. They durſt not ſtake their preſent and future happineſs on their own chimerical imaginations, and did not only ſhun perſecution, but affirmed that it was unneceſſary for their followers to bear their religion through ſuch fiery trials.

VII. We may fairly reckon, that this firſt age of apoſtles and diſciples, with that ſecond generation of many who were their immediate converts, extended itſelf to the middle of the ſecond century, and that ſeveral of the third generation from theſe laſt mentioned, which was but the fifth from Chriſt, continued to the end of the third century. Did we know the ages and numbers of the members in every particular church, which was planted by the apoſtles, I doubt not but in moſt of them there might be found five perſons, who in a continued ſeries would reach through theſe three centuries of years, that is, till the 265th from the death of our Saviour.

VIII. Among the accounts of thoſe very few out of innumerable multitudes, who had embraced Chriſti-

Chriſtianity, I ſhall ſingle out four perſons eminent for their lives, their writings, and their ſufferings, that were ſucceſſively contemporaries, and bring us down as far as to the year of our Lord 254. St. John, who was the beloved diſciple, and converſed the moſt intimately with our Saviour, lived till *Anno Dom.* 100. Polycarp, who was the diſciple of St. John, and had converſed with others of the apoſtles and diſciples of our Lord, lived till *Anno Dom.* 167, tho' his life was ſhortened by martyrdom. Irenæus, who was the diſciple of Polycarp, and had converſed with many of the immediate diſciples of the apoſtles, lived, at the loweſt computation of his age, till the year 202, when he was likewiſe cut off by martyrdom; in which year the great Origen was appointed regent of the catechetic ſchool in Alexandria, and as he was the miracle of that age, for induſtry, learning and philoſophy, he was looked on as the champion of Chriſtianity, till the year 254, when, if he did not ſuffer martyrdom, as ſome think he did, he was certainly actuated by the ſpirit of it, as appears in the whole courſe of his life and writings; nay, he had often been put to the torture, and had undergone trials worſe than death. As he converſed with the moſt eminent Chriſtians of his time in Egypt, and in the Eaſt; brought over multitudes both from Hereſy and Heatheniſm, and left behind him ſeveral diſciples of great fame and learning, there is no queſtion but there were conſiderable numbers of thoſe who knew him, and had been his hearers, ſcholars, or proſelytes, that lived till the end of the third century, and to the reign of Conſtantine the Great.

IX. It is evident to thoſe, who read the lives and writings of Polycarp, Irenæus, and Origen, that

that theſe three fathers believed the accounts which are given of our Saviour in the four evangeliſts, and had undoubted arguments that not only St. John, but many others of our Saviour's diſciples, publiſhed the ſame accounts of him. To which we muſt ſubjoin this further remark, that what was believed by theſe fathers on this ſubject, was likewiſe the belief of the main body of Chriſtians in thoſe ſucceſſive ages when they flouriſhed; ſince Polycarp cannot but be looked upon, if we conſider the reſpect that was paid him, as the repreſentative of the Eaſtern churches in this particular, Irenæus of the Weſtern upon the ſame account, and Origen of thoſe eſtabliſhed in Egypt.

X. To theſe I might add Paul the famous Hermite, who retired from the Decian perſecution five or ſix years before Origen's death, and lived till the year 343. I have only diſcovered one of thoſe channels by which the hiſtory of our Saviour might be conveyed pure and unadulterated, through thoſe ſeveral ages that produced thoſe Pagan philoſophers, whoſe teſtimonies I make uſe of for the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory. Some or other of theſe philoſophers came into the Chriſtian faith during its infancy, in the ſeveral periods of theſe three firſt centuries, when they had ſuch means of informing themſelves in all the particulars of our Saviour's hiſtory. I muſt further add, that though I have here only choſen this ſingle link of martyrs, I might find out others among thoſe names which are ſtill extant, that delivered down this account of our Saviour in a ſucceſſive tradition, till the whole Roman empire became Chriſtian; as there is no queſtion but numberleſs ſeries of witneſſes might follow one another in the ſame order, and in as ſhort a chain, and that perhaps in

in every ſingle church, had the names and ages of the moſt eminent primitive Chriſtians been tranſmitted to us with the like certainty.

XI. But to give this conſideration more force, we muſt take notice, that the tradition of the firſt ages of Chriſtianity had ſeveral circumſtances peculiar to it, which made it more authentic than any other tradition in any other age of the world. The Chriſtians, who carried their religion through ſo many general and particular perſecutions, were inceſſantly comforting and ſupporting one another, with the example and hiſtory of our Saviour and his apoſtles. It was the ſubject not only of their ſolemn aſſemblies, but of their private viſits and converſations. "Our virgins," ſays Tatian, who lived in the ſecond century, "diſ-"courſe over their diſtaffs on divine ſubjects." Indeed, when religion was woven into the civil government, and flouriſhed under the protection of the Emperors, mens thoughts and diſcourſes were, as they are now, full of ſecular affairs; but in the three firſt centuries of Chriſtianity, men, who embraced this religion, had given up all their intereſts in this world, and lived in a perpetual preparation for the next, as not knowing how ſoon they might be called to it: ſo that they had little elſe to talk of but the life and doctrines of that divine perſon, which was their hope, their encouragement, and their glory. We cannot therefore imagine, that there was a ſingle perſon arrived at any degree of age or conſideration, who had not heard and repeated above a thouſand times in his life, all the particulars of our Saviour's birth, life, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion.

XII. Eſpecially if we conſider, that they could not then be received as Chriſtians, till they had undergone ſeveral examinations. Perſons of riper

years, who flocked daily into the church during the three firſt centuries, were obliged to paſs through many repeated inſtructions, and give a ſtrict account of their proficiency, before they were admitted to baptiſm. And as for thoſe who were born of Chriſtian parents, and had been baptized in their infancy, they were with the like care prepared and diſciplined for confirmation, which they could not arrive at, till they were found upon examination to have made a ſufficient progreſs in the knowledge of Chriſtianity.

XIII. We muſt further obſerve, that there was not only in thoſe times this religious converſation among private Chriſtians, but a conſtant correſpondence between the churches that were eſtabliſhed by the apoſtles or their ſucceſſors, in the ſeveral parts of the world. If any new doctrine was ſtarted, or any fact reported of our Saviour, a ſtrict inquiry was made among the churches, eſpecially thoſe planted by the apoſtles themſelves, whether they had received any ſuch doctrine or account of our Saviour, from the mouths of the apoſtles, or the tradition of thoſe Chriſtians, who had preceded the preſent members of the churches, which were thus conſulted. By this means, when any novelty was publiſhed, it was immediately detected and cenſured.

XIV. St. John, who lived ſo many years after our Saviour, was appealed to in theſe emergencies as the living oracle of the church; and as his oral teſtimony laſted the firſt century, many have obſerved, that, by a particular providence of God, ſeveral of our Saviour's diſciples, and of the early converts of his religion, lived to a very great age, that they might perſonally convey the truth of the Goſpel to thoſe times, which were very remote from

from the firſt publication of it. Of theſe, beſides St. John, we have a remarkable inſtance in Simeon, who was one of the ſeventy ſent forth by our Saviour, to publiſh the Goſpel before his crucifixion, and a near kinſman of the Lord. This venerable perſon, who had probably heard with his own ears our Saviour's prophecy of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, preſided over the church eſtabliſhed in that city, during the time of its memorable ſiege, and drew his congregation out of thoſe dreadful and unparallel'd calamities which befel his countrymen, by following the advice our Saviour had given, when they ſhould ſee Jeruſalem encompaſſed with armies, and the Roman ſtandards, or abomination of deſolation, ſet up. He lived till the year of our Lord 107, when he was martyred under the Emperor Trajan.

SECTION VI.

I. *The tradition of the apoſtles ſecured by other excellent inſtitutions;*
II. *But chiefly by the writings of the evangeliſts.*
III. *The diligence of the diſciples and firſt Chriſtian converts, to ſend abroad theſe writings.*
IV. *That the written account of our Saviour was the ſame with that delivered by tradition:*
V. *Proved from the reception of the Goſpel by thoſe churches which were eſtabliſhed before it was written;*
VI. *From the uniformity of what was believed in the ſeveral churches;*
VII. *From a remarkable paſſage in* Irenæus.

VIII. *Records which are now loſt, of uſe to the three firſt centuries, for confirming the hiſtory of our Saviour.*

IX. *Inſtances of ſuch records.*

I. THUS far we ſee how the learned Pagans might apprize themſelves from oral information of the particulars of our Saviour's hiſtory. They could hear, in every church planted in every diſtant part of the earth, the account which was there received and preſerved among them, of the hiſtory of our Saviour. They could learn the names and characters of thoſe firſt miſſionaries that brought to them theſe accounts, and the miracles by which God Almighty atteſted their reports. But the apoſtles and diſciples of Chriſt, to preſerve the hiſtory of his life, and to ſecure their accounts of him from error and oblivion, did not only ſet aſide certain perſons for that purpoſe, as has been already ſhewn, but appropriated certain days to the commemoration of thoſe facts which they had related concerning him. The firſt day of the week was in all its returns a perpetual memorial of his reſurrection, as the devotional exerciſes adapted to Friday and Saturday, were to denote to all ages, that he was crucified on the one of thoſe days, and that he reſted in the grave on the other. You may apply the ſame remark to ſeveral of the annual feſtivals inſtituted by the apoſtles themſelves, or at furtheſt by their immediate ſucceſſors, in memory of the moſt important particulars in our Saviour's hiſtory; to which we muſt add the ſacraments inſtituted by our Lord himſelf, and many of thoſe rites and ceremonies which obtained in the moſt early times of the church. Theſe are to be regarded as ſtanding marks of ſuch facts

facts as were delivered by thoſe, who were eye-witneſſes to them, and which were contrived with great wiſdom to laſt till time ſhould be no more. Theſe, without any other means, might have, in ſome meaſure, conveyed to poſterity, the memory of ſeveral tranſactions in the hiſtory of our Saviour, as they were related by his diſciples. At leaſt, the reaſon of theſe inſtitutions, though they might be forgotten, and obſcured by a long courſe of years, could not but be very well known by thoſe who lived in the three firſt centuries; and a means of informing the inquiſitive Pagans in the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, that being the view in which I am to conſider them.

II. But leſt ſuch a tradition, though guarded by ſo many expedients, ſhould wear out by the length of time, the four Evangeliſts, within about fifty or, as Theodoret affirms, thirty years after our Saviour's death, while the memory of his actions was freſh among them, conſigned to writing that hiſtory, which for ſome years had been publiſhed only by the mouths of the apoſtles and diſciples. The further conſideration of theſe holy Penmen will fall under another part of this diſcourſe.

III. It will be ſufficient to obſerve here, that, in the age which ſucceeded the apoſtles, many of their immediate diſciples ſent or carried in perſon the books of the four Evangeliſts, which had been written by apoſtles, or at leaſt approved by them, to moſt of the churches which they had planted in the different parts of the world. This was done with ſo much diligence, that when Pantænus, a man of great learning and piety, had travelled into India for the propagation of Chriſtianity, about the year of our Lord 200, he found among that remote people the Goſpel of St. Matthew,

which, upon his return from that country, he brought with him to Alexandria. This Goſpel is generally ſuppoſed to have been left in thoſe parts by St. Bartholomew the Apoſtle of the Indies, who probably carried it with him, before the writings of the three other Evangeliſts were publiſhed.

IV. That the hiſtory of our Saviour, as recorded by the evangeliſts, was the ſame with that which had been before delivered by the apoſtles and diſciples, will further appear in the proſecution of this diſcourſe, and may be gathered from the following conſiderations.

V. Had theſe writings differed from the ſermons of the firſt planters of Chriſtianity, either in hiſtory or doctrine, there is no queſtion but they would have been rejected by thoſe churches which they had already formed. But ſo conſiſtent and uniform was the relation of the apoſtles, that theſe hiſtories appeared to be nothing elſe, but their tradition and oral atteſtations made fix'd and permanent. Thus was the fame of our Saviour, which, in ſo few years, had gone through the whole earth, confirmed and perpetuated by ſuch records, as would preſerve the traditionary account of him to after-ages; and rectify it, if at any time, by paſſing through ſeveral generations, it might drop any part that was material, or contract any thing that was falſe or fictitious.

VI. Accordingly we find the ſame Jeſus Chriſt, who was born of a virgin, who had wrought many miracles in Paleſtine, who was crucified, roſe again, and aſcended into heaven; I ſay, the ſame Jeſus Chriſt had been preached, and was worſhipped, in Germany, France, Spain, and Great-Britain; in Parthia, Media, Meſopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Aſia, and Pamphilia; in Italy, Egypt, Afric, and beyond Cyrene, India and Perſia;

ſia; and, in ſhort, in all the iſlands and provinces that are viſited by the riſing or ſetting ſun. The ſame account of our Saviour's life and doctrine was delivered by thouſands of preachers, and believed in thouſands of places, who all, as faſt as it could be conveyed to them, received the ſame account in writing from the four Evangeliſts.

VII. Irenæus to this purpoſe very aptly remarks, that thoſe barbarous nations, who in his time were not poſſeſſed of the written Goſpels, and had only learned the hiſtory of our Saviour from thoſe who had converted them to Chriſtianity before the Goſpels were written, had among them the ſame accounts of our Saviour, which are to be met with in the four Evangeliſts: an unconteſtable proof of the harmony and concurrence between the holy Scripture and the tradition of the churches in thoſe early times of Chriſtianity.

VIII. Thus we ſee what opportunities the learned and inquiſitive Heathens had of informing themſelves of the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, during the three firſt centuries, eſpecially as they lay nearer one than another to the fountain-head: beſide which, there were many uncontroverted traditions, records of Chriſtianity, and particular hiſtories, that then threw light into theſe matters, but are now entirely loſt, by which, at that time, any appearance of contradiction, or ſeeming difficulties, in the hiſtory of the evangeliſts, were fully cleared up and explained; though we meet with fewer appearances of this nature in the hiſtory of our Saviour, as related by the four Evangeliſts, than in the accounts of any other perſon, publiſhed by ſuch a number of different hiſtorians who lived at ſo great a diſtance from the preſent age.

IX. Among

IX. Among thoſe records which are loſt, and were of great uſe to the primitive Chriſtians, is the letter to Tiberius, which I have already mentioned; that of Marcus Aurelius, which I ſhall take notice of hereafter; the writings of Hegeſippus, who had drawn down the hiſtory of Chriſtianity to his own time, which was not beyond the middle of the ſecond century; the genuine Sibylline oracles, which in the firſt ages of the church were eaſily diſtinguiſhed from the ſpurious; the records preſerved in particular churches, with many other of the ſame nature.

SECTION VII.

I. *The ſight of miracles in thoſe ages, a further confirmation of* Pagan *philoſophers in the Chriſtian faith.*
II. *The credibility of ſuch miracles.*
III. *A particular inſtance.*
IV. *Martyrdom, why conſidered as a ſtanding miracle.*
V. *Primitive Chriſtians thought many of the martyrs were ſupported by a miraculous power.*
VI. *Proved from the nature of their ſufferings.*
VII. *How martyrs further induced the* Pagans *to embrace Chriſtianity.*

I. THERE were other means, which I find had a great influence on the learned of the three firſt centuries, to create and confirm in them the belief of our bleſſed Saviour's hiſtory, which ought not to be paſſed over in ſilence. The firſt was, the opportunity they enjoyed of examining thoſe miracles, which were on ſeveral occaſions performed by Chriſtians, and appeared in

in the church, more or leſs, during theſe firſt ages of Chriſtianity. Theſe had great weight with the men I am now ſpeaking of, who, from learned Pagans, became fathers of the church; for they frequently boaſt of them in their writings, as atteſtations given by God himſelf to the truth of their religion.

II. At the ſame time, that theſe learned men declare how diſingenuous, baſe and wicked it would be, how much beneath the dignity of philoſophy, and contrary to the precepts of Chriſtianity, to utter falſhoods or forgeries in the ſupport of a cauſe, though never ſo juſt in itſelf, they confidently aſſert this miraculous power, which then ſubſiſted in the church, nay tell us that they themſelves had been eye-witneſſes of it at ſeveral times, and in ſeveral inſtances; nay appeal to the Heathens themſelves for the truth of ſeveral facts they relate, nay challenge them to be preſent at their aſſemblies, and ſatisfy themſelves, if they doubt of it; nay we find that Pagan authors have in ſome inſtances confeſſed this miraculous power.

III. The letter of Marcus Aurelius, whoſe army was preſerved by a refreſhing ſhower, at the ſame time that his enemies were diſcomfited by a ſtorm of lightning, and which the Heathen hiſtorians themſelves allow to have been ſupernatural and the effect of magic; I ſay, this letter, which aſcribed this unexpected aſſiſtance to the prayers of the Chriſtians, who then ſerved in the army, would have been thought an unqueſtionable teſtimony of the miraculous power I am ſpeaking of, had it been ſtill preſerved. It is ſufficient for me in this place to take notice, that this was one of thoſe miracles which had its influence on the learned converts, becauſe it is related by Tertullian, and the very letter appealed to. When theſe learned men.

men ſaw ſickneſs and frenzy cured, the dead raiſed, the oracles put to ſilence, the dæmons and evil ſpirits forced to confeſs themſelves no Gods, by perſons who only made uſe of prayer and adjurations in the name of their crucified Saviour; how could they doubt of their Saviour's power on the like occaſions, as repreſented to them by the traditions of the church, and the writings of the evangeliſts?

IV. Under this head, I cannot omit that which appears to me a ſtanding miracle in the three firſt centuries, I mean, that amazing and ſupernatural courage or patience, which was ſhewn by innumerable multitudes of martyrs, in thoſe ſlow and painful torments that were inflicted on them. I cannot conceive a man placed in the burning iron chair at Lyons, amid the inſults and mockeries of a crouded amphitheatre, and ſtill keeping his ſeat; or ſtretched upon a grate of iron, over coals of fire, and breathing out his ſoul among the exquiſite ſufferings of ſuch a tedious execution, rather than renounce his religion, or blaſpheme his Saviour. Such trials ſeem to me above the ſtrength of human nature, and able to over-bear duty, reaſon, faith, conviction, nay, and the moſt abſolute certainty of a future ſtate. Humanity, unaſſiſted in an extraordinary manner, muſt have ſhaken off the preſent preſſure, and have delivered itſelf out of ſuch a dreadful diſtreſs, by any means that could have been ſuggeſted to it. We can eaſily imagine, that many perſons, in ſo good a cauſe, might have laid down their lives at the gibbet, the ſtake, or the block: but, to expire leiſurely among the moſt exquiſite tortures, when they might come out of them, even by a mental reſervation, or an hypocriſy, which was not without a poſſibility of being followed by repentance and forgiveneſs, has

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ſomething in it, ſo far beyond the force and natural ſtrength of mortals, that one cannot but think there was ſome miraculous power to ſupport the ſufferer.

V. We find, the church of Smyrna, in that admirable letter, which gives an account of the death of Polycarp their beloved biſhop, mentioning the cruel torments of other early martyrs for Chriſtianity, are of opinion, that our Saviour ſtood by them in a viſion, and perſonally converſed with them, to give them ſtrength and comfort during the bitterneſs of their long continued agonies; and we have the ſtory of a young man, who, having ſuffered many tortures, eſcaped with life, and told his Fellow-chriſtians, that the pain of them had been rendered tolerable, by the preſence of an angel who ſtood by him, and wiped off the tears and ſweat, which ran down his face whilſt he lay under his ſufferings. We are aſſured at leaſt that the firſt martyr for Chriſtianity was encouraged in his laſt moments, by a viſion of that Divine Perſon, for whom he ſuffered, and into whoſe preſence he was then haſtening.

VI. Let any man calmly lay his hand upon his heart, and, after reading theſe terrible conflicts in which the antient martyrs and confeſſors were engaged, when they paſſed through ſuch new inventions and varieties of pain, as tired their tormentors; and aſk himſelf, however zealous and ſincere he is in his religion, whether under ſuch acute and lingring tortures he could ſtill have held faſt his integrity, and have profeſſed his faith to the laſt, without a ſupernatural aſſiſtance of ſome kind or other. For my part, when I conſider that it was not an unaccountable obſtinacy in a ſingle man, or in any particular ſet of men, in ſome extraordinary juncture; but that there were multi-

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tudes of each ſex, of every age, of different countries and conditions, who for near 300 years together made this glorious confeſſion of their faith, in the midſt of tortures, and in the hour of death; I muſt conclude, that they were either of another make than men are at preſent, or that they had ſuch miraculous ſupports as were peculiar to thoſe times of Chriſtianity; when without them perhaps the very name of it might have been extinguiſhed.

VII. It is certain, that the deaths and ſufferings of the primitive Chriſtians had a great ſhare in the converſion of thoſe learned Pagans, who lived in the ages of perſecution, which with ſome intervals and abatements laſted near 300 years after our Saviour. Juſtin Martyr, Tertullian, Lactantius, Arnobius, and others, tell us, that this firſt of all alarmed their curioſity, rouſed their attention, and made them ſeriouſly inquiſitive into the nature of that religion, which could endue the mind with ſo much ſtrength, and overcome the fear of death, nay raiſe an earneſt deſire of it, though it appeared in all its terrors. This they found had not been effected by all the doctrines of thoſe philoſophers, whom they had throughly ſtudied, and who had been labouring at this great point. The ſight of theſe dying and tormented martyrs engaged them to ſearch into the hiſtory and doctrines of him for whom they ſuffered. The more they ſearched, the more they were convinced; till their conviction grew ſo ſtrong, that they themſelves embraced the ſame truths, and either actually laid down their lives, or were always in a readineſs to do it, rather than depart from them.

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SECTION VIII.

I. *The completion of our Saviour's prophecies confirmed* Pagans *in their belief of the Goſpel.*
II. Origen's *obſervation on that of his diſciples being brought before kings and governors*;
III. *On their being perſecuted for their religion*;
IV. *On their preaching the Goſpel to all nations*;
V. *On the deſtruction of* Jeruſalem, *and ruin of the* Jewiſh *œconomy.*
VI. *Theſe arguments ſtrengthened by what has happened ſince* Origen's *time.*

I. THE ſecond of theſe extraordinary means, of great uſe to the learned and inquiſitive Pagans of the three firſt centuries, for evincing the truth of the hiſtory of our Saviour, was the completion of ſuch prophecies as are recorded of him in the evangeliſts. They could not indeed form any arguments from what he foretold, and was fulfilled during his life, becauſe both the prophecy and the completion were over before they were publiſhed by the evangeliſts; though, as Origen obſerves, what end could there be in forging ſome of theſe predictions, as that of St. Peter's denying his maſter, and all his diſciples forſaking him in the greateſt extremity, which reflects ſo much ſhame on the great Apoſtle, and on all his companions? Nothing but a ſtrict adherence to truth, and to matters of fact, could have prompted the evangeliſts to relate a circumſtance ſo diſadvantageous to their own reputation; as that father has well obſerved.

II. But to purſue his reflexions on this ſubject: There are predictions of our Saviour recorded by the evangeliſts, which were not completed till af-

ter their deaths, and had no likelihood of being ſo, when they were pronounced by our bleſſed Saviour. Such was that wonderful notice he gave them, that they ſhould be brought before governors and kings for his ſake, for a teſtimony againſt them and the Gentiles, Mat. x. 28. with the other like prophecies, by which he foretold that his diſciples were to be perſecuted. Is there any other doctrine in the world, ſays this father, whoſe followers are puniſhed? Can the enemies of Chriſt ſay, that he knew his opinions were falſe and impious, and that therefore he might well conjecture and foretel what would be the treatment of thoſe perſons who ſhould embrace them? Suppoſing his doctrines were really ſuch, why ſhould this be the conſequence? what likelihood that men ſhould be brought before kings and governors for opinions and tenets of any kind, when this never happened even to the Epicureans, who abſolutely denied a providence; nor to the Peripatetics themſelves, who laughed at the prayers and ſacrifices which were made to the Divinity? Are there any but the Chriſtians who, according to this prediction of our Saviour, being brought before kings and governors for his ſake, are preſſed to their lateſt gaſp of breath, by their reſpective judges, to renounce Chriſtianity, and to procure their liberty and reſt, by offering the ſame ſacrifices, and taking the ſame oaths that others did?

III. Conſider the time when our Saviour pronounced thoſe words, Mat. x. 32. "Whoſoever "ſhall confeſs me before men, him will I con- "feſs alſo before my Father who is in heaven: "but whoſoever ſhall deny me before men, him "will I alſo deny before my Father who is in "heaven." Had you heard him ſpeak after this manner, when as yet his diſciples were under no

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ſuch trials, you would certainly have ſaid within yourſelf, if theſe ſpeeches of Jeſus are true, and if, according to his prediction, governors and kings undertake to ruin and deſtroy thoſe who ſhall profeſs themſelves his diſciples, we will believe, not only that he is a prophet, but that he has received power from God ſufficient to preſerve and propagate his religion; and that he would never talk in ſuch a peremptory and diſcouraging manner, were he not aſſured that he was able to ſubdue the moſt powerful oppoſition, that could be made againſt the faith and doctrine which he taught.

IV. Who is not ſtruck with admiration, when he repreſents to himſelf our Saviour at that time foretelling, that his Goſpel ſhould be preached in all the world, for a witneſs unto all nations, or, as Origen, (who rather quotes the ſenſe than the words), to ſerve for a conviction to kings, and people, when, at the ſame time, he finds that his Goſpel has accordingly been preached to Greeks and Barbarians, to the learned and to the ignorant, and that there is no quality or condition of life able to exempt men from ſubmitting to the doctrine of Chriſt? As for us, ſays this great author, in another part of his book againſt Celſus, "When we "ſee every day thoſe events exactly accompliſhed "which our Saviour foretold at ſo great a diſtance; "that his Goſpel is preached in all the world, "Mat. xxiv. 14. that his diſciples go and teach "all nations, Mat. xxviii. 19. and that thoſe who "have received his doctrine, are brought for his "ſake before governors, and before kings, Mat. x. "18. we are filled with admiration, and our faith "in him is confirmed more and more. What "clearer and ſtronger proofs can Celſus aſk for the "truth of what he ſpoke?"

V. Origen inſiſts likewiſe with great ſtrength on that wonderful prediction of our Saviour concerning the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, pronounced at a time, as he obſerves, when there was no likelihood nor appearance of it. This has been taken notice of, and inculcated by ſo many others, that I ſhall refer you to what this father has ſaid on the ſubject in the firſt book againſt Celſus. And as to the accompliſhment of this remarkable prophecy, I ſhall only obſerve, that whoever reads the account given us by Joſephus, without knowing his character, and compares it with what our Saviour foretold, would think the hiſtorian had been a Chriſtian, and that he had nothing elſe in view but to adjuſt the event to the prediction.

VI. I cannot quit this head without taking notice, that Origen would ſtill have triumphed more in the foregoing arguments, had he lived an age longer, to have ſeen the Roman Emperors, and all their governors and provinces, ſubmitting themſelves to the Chriſtian religion, and glorying in its profeſſion, as ſo many kings and ſovereigns ſtill place their relation to Chriſt at the head of their titles.

How much greater confirmation of his faith would he have received, had he ſeen our Saviour's prophecy ſtand good in the deſtruction of the temple, and the diſſolution of the Jewiſh œconomy, when Jews and Pagans united all their endeavours under Julian the apoſtate, to baffle and falſify the prediction? The great preparations that were made for rebuilding the temple, with the hurricane, earthquake, and eruptions of fire, that deſtroyed the work, and terrified thoſe employed in the attempt from proceeding in it, are related by many hiſtorians of the ſame age, and the ſubſtance of the ſtory teſtified both by Pagan and Jewiſh writers,

ters, as Ammianus Marcellinus and Zamath-David. The learned Chryſoſtome, in a ſermon againſt the Jews, tells them this fact was then freſh in the memories even of their young men, that it happened but twenty years ago, and that it was atteſted by all the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, where they might ſtill ſee the marks of it in the rubbiſh of that work, from which the Jews deſiſted in ſo great a fright, and which even Julian had not the courage to carry on. This fact, which is in itſelf ſo miraculous, and ſo indiſputable, brought over many of the Jews to Chriſtianity; and ſhows us, that, after our Saviour's prophecy againſt it, the temple could not be preſerved from the plough paſſing over it, by all the care of Titus, who would fain have prevented its deſtruction, and that inſtead of being re-edified by Julian, all his endeavours towards it did but ſtill more literally accompliſh our Saviour's prediction, that not one ſtone ſhould be left upon another.

The antient Chriſtians were ſo entirely perſuaded of the force of our Saviour's prophecies, and of the puniſhment which the Jews had drawn upon themſelves, and upon their children, for the treatment which the Meſſiah had received at their hands, that they did not doubt but they would always remain an abandoned and diſperſed people, an hiſſing and an aſtoniſhment among the nations, as they are to this day. In ſhort, that they had loſt their peculiarity of being God's people, which was now transferred to the body of Chriſtians, and which preſerved the church of Chriſt among all the conflicts, difficulties and perſecutions, in which it was engaged, as it had preſerved the Jewiſh government and œconomy for ſo many ages, whilſt it had the ſame truth and vital principle in it, notwithſtanding it was ſo frequently in danger of be-

ing utterly aboliſhed and deſtroyed. Origen, in his fourth book againſt Celſus, mentioning their being caſt out of Jeruſalem, the place to which their worſhip was annexed, deprived of their temple and ſacrifice, their religious rites and ſolemnities, and ſcattered over the face of the earth, ventures to aſſure them with a face of confidence, that they would never be re-eſtabliſhed, ſince they had committed that horrid crime againſt the Saviour of the world. This was a bold aſſertion in the good man, who knew how this people had been ſo wonderfully re-eſtabliſhed in former times, when they were almoſt ſwallowed up, and in the moſt deſperate ſtate of deſolation, as in their deliverance out of the Babyloniſh captivity, and the oppreſſions of Antiochus Epiphanes. Nay, he knew that, within leſs than an hundred years before his own time, the Jews had made ſuch a powerful effort for their re-eſtabliſhment under Barchocab, in the reign of Adrian, as ſhook the whole Roman empire. But he founded his opinion on a ſure word of prophecy, and on the puniſhment they had ſo juſtly incurred; and we find by a long experience of 1500 years, that he was not miſtaken, nay that his opinion gathers ſtrength daily, ſince the Jews are now at a greater diſtance from any probability of ſuch a re-eſtabliſhment, than they were when Origen wrote.

SECTION IX.

I. *The lives of primitive Chriſtians, another means of bringing learned* Pagans *into their religion.*
II. *The change and reformation of their manners.*
III. *This looked upon as ſupernatural by the learned* Pagans,

IV. *And*

IV. *And ſtrengthened the accounts given of our Saviour's life and hiſtory.*
V. *The* Jewiſh *prophecies of our Saviour, an argument for the Heathens belief:*
VI. *Purſued:*
VII. *Purſued.*

I. THERE was one other means enjoyed by the learned Pagans of the three firſt centuries, for ſatisfying them in the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, which I might have flung under one of the foregoing heads; but as it is ſo ſhining a particular, and does ſo much honour to our religion, I ſhall make a diſtinct article of it, and only conſider it with regard to the ſubject I am upon: I mean the lives and manners of thoſe holy men, who believed in Chriſt during the firſt ages of Chriſtianity. I ſhould be thought to advance a paradox, ſhould I affirm that there were more Chriſtians in the world during thoſe times of perſecution, than there are at preſent in theſe which we call the flouriſhing times of Chriſtianity. But this will be found an indiſputable truth, if we form our calculation upon the opinions which prevailed in thoſe days, that every one who lives in the habitual practice of any voluntary ſin, actually cuts himſelf off from the benefits and profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and whatever he may call himſelf, is in reality no Chriſtian, nor ought to be eſteemed as ſuch.

II. In the times we are now ſurveying, the Chriſtian religion ſhowed its full force and efficacy on the minds of men, and by many examples demonſtrated what great and generous ſouls it was capable of producing. It exalted and refined its proſelytes to a very high degree of perfection, and ſet them far above the pleaſures, and even the pains, of this life. It ſtrengthened the infirmity, and broke the fierce-

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neſs of human nature. It lifted up the minds of the ignorant to the knowledge and worſhip of him that made them, and inſpired the vicious with a rational devotion, a ſtrict purity of heart, and an unbounded love to their fellow-creatures. In proportion as it ſpread through the world, it ſeemed to change mankind into another ſpecies of beings. No ſooner was a convert initiated into it, but, by an eaſy figure, he became a new man, and both acted and looked upon himſelf as one regenerated and born a ſecond time into another ſtate of exiſtence.

III. It is not my buſineſs to be more particular in the accounts of primitive Chriſtianity, which have been exhibited ſo well by others, but rather to obſerve, that the Pagan converts, of whom I am now ſpeaking, mention this great reformation of thoſe who had been the greateſt ſinners, with that ſudden and ſurpriſing change which it made in the lives of the moſt profligate, as having ſomething in it ſupernatural, miraculous, and more than human. Origen repreſents this power in the Chriſtian religion, as no leſs wonderful than that of curing the lame and blind, or cleanſing the leper. Many others repreſent it in the ſame light, and looked upon it as an argument that there was a certain divinity in that religion, which ſhowed itſelf in ſuch ſtrange and glorious effects.

IV. This therefore was a great means not only of recommending Chriſtianity to honeſt and learned Heathens, but of confirming them in the belief of our Saviour's hiſtory, when they ſaw multitudes of virtuous men daily forming themſelves upon his example, animated by his precepts, and actuated by that ſpirit which he had promiſed to ſend among his diſciples.

V. But I find no argument made a ſtronger impreſſion on the minds of theſe eminent Pagan converts,

converts, for ſtrengthening their faith in the hiſtory of our Saviour, than the predictions relating to him in thoſe old prophetic writings, which were depoſited among the hands of the greateſt enemies to Chriſtianity, and owned by them to have been extant many ages before his appearance. The learned Heathen converts were aſtoniſhed to ſee the whole hiſtory of their Saviour's life publiſhed before he was born, and to find that the evangeliſts and prophets, in their accounts of the Meſſiah, differed only in point of time, the one foretelling what ſhould happen to him, and the other deſcribing thoſe very particulars as what had actually happened. This our Saviour himſelf was pleaſed to make uſe of as the ſtrongeſt argument of his being the promiſed Meſſiah, and without it would hardly have reconciled his diſciples to the ignominy of his death, as in that remarkable paſſage which mentions his converſation with the two diſciples, on the day of his reſurrection. St. Luke xxiv. 13. to the end.

VI. The Heathen converts, after having travelled through all human learning, and fortified their minds with the knowledge of arts and ſciences, were particularly qualified to examine theſe prophecies with great care and impartiality, and without prejudice or prepoſſeſſion. If the Jews, on the one ſide, put an unnatural interpretation on theſe prophecies, to evade the force of them in their controverſies with the Chriſtians; or if the Chriſtians, on the other ſide, over-ſtrained ſeveral paſſages in their applications of them, as it often happens among men of the beſt underſtanding, when their minds are heated with any conſideration that bears a more than ordinary weight with it: the learned Heathens may be looked upon as neuters in the matter, when all theſe prophecies were new to them, and their education had left the interpretation

tion of them free and indifferent. Beſides, theſe learned men, among the primitive Chriſtians, knew how the Jews, who had preceded our Saviour, interpreted theſe predictions, and the ſeveral marks, by which they acknowledged the Meſſiah, would be diſcovered, and how thoſe of the Jewiſh doctors, who ſucceeded him, had deviated from the interpretations and doctrines of their forefathers, n purpoſe to ſtiffle their own conviction.

VII. This ſet of arguments had therefore an invincible force with thoſe Pagan philoſophers who became Chriſtians, as we find in moſt of their writings. They could not diſbelieve our Saviour's hiſtory, which ſo exactly agreed with every thing that had been written of him, many ages before his birth, nor doubt of thoſe circumſtances being fulfilled in him, which could not be true of any perſon that lived in the world beſides himſelf. This wrought the greateſt confuſion in the unbelieving Jews, and the greateſt conviction in the Gentiles, who everywhere ſpeak with aſtoniſhment of theſe truths they met with in this new magazine of learning which was opened to them, and carry the point ſo far as to think whatever excellent doctrine they had met with among Pagan writers, had been ſtole from their converſation with the Jews, or from the peruſal of theſe writings which they had in their cuſtody.

A D-

ADDITIONAL DISCOURSES.

SECT. I.

Of GOD, *and his Attributes.*

Qui mare et terras variiſque mundum
Temperat horis:
Unde nil majus generatur ipſo,
Nec viget quicquam ſimile aut ſecundum.
Hor. Od. 12. Lib. I. V. 13.

Who guides below, and rules above,
The great Diſpoſer and the mighty King:
Than he none greater, next him none,
That can be, is, or was;
Supreme he ſingly fills the Throne. CREECH.

SIMONIDES, being aſked by Dionyſius the tyrant what God was, deſired a day's time to conſider of it before he made his reply. When the day was expired, he deſired two days; and afterwards, inſtead of returning his anſwer, demanded ſtill double time to conſider of it. This great poet and philoſopher, the more he contemplated the nature of the Deity, found that he waded but the more out of his depth; and that he loſt himſelf in the thought, inſtead of finding an end of it.

If we conſider the idea which wiſe men, by the light of reaſon, have framed of the divine being, it amounts to this: That he has in him all the perfection of a ſpiritual nature; and ſince we have no notion of any kind of ſpiritual perfection but what we

we diſcover in our own ſouls, we join infinitude to each kind of theſe perfections, and what is a faculty, in an human ſoul, becomes an attribute in God. We exiſt in place and time, the divine being fills the immenſity of ſpace with his preſence, and inhabits eternity. We are poſſeſſed of a little power and a little knowledge, the divine being is almighty and omniſcient. In ſhort, by adding infinity to any kind of perfection we enjoy, and by joining all theſe different kinds of perfections in one being, we form our idea of the great ſovereign of nature.

Though every one who thinks muſt have made this obſervation, I ſhall produce Mr. Locke's authority to the ſame purpoſe, out of his Eſſay on human underſtanding. "If we examine the idea we have of "the incomprehenſible ſupreme being, we ſhall "find, that we come by it the ſame way; and that "the complex ideas we have both of God and ſe-"parate ſpirits, are made up of the ſimple ideas "we receive from reflexion: *v. g.* having from "what we experiment in ourſelves, got the ideas "of exiſtence and duration, of knowledge and "power, of pleaſure and happineſs, and of ſeveral "other qualities and powers, which it is better to "have, than to be without; when we would frame "an idea the moſt ſuitable we can to the ſupreme "being, we enlarge every one of theſe with our "idea of infinity; and ſo, putting them together, "make our complex idea of God."

It is not impoſſible that there may be many kinds of ſpiritual perfection, beſides thoſe which are lodged in an human ſoul; but it is impoſſible that we ſhould have ideas of any kinds of perfection, except thoſe of which we have ſome ſmall rays and ſhort imperfect ſtrokes in ourſelves. It would be therefore a very high preſumption to determine whether

whether the ſupreme being has not many more attributes than thoſe which enter into our conceptions of him. This is certain, that if there be any kind of ſpiritual perfection which is not marked out in an human ſoul, it belongs, in its fulneſs, to the divine nature.

Several eminent philoſophers have imagined that the ſoul, in her ſeparate ſtate, may have new faculties ſpringing up in her, which ſhe is not capable of exerting during her preſent union with the body; and whether theſe faculties may not correſpond with other attributes in the divine nature, and open to us hereafter new matter of wonder and adoration, we are altogether ignorant. This, as I have ſaid before, we ought to acquieſce in, that the ſovereign being, the great Author of nature, has in him all poſſible perfection, as well in kind as in degree; to ſpeak according to our methods of conceiving. I ſhall only add under this head, that when we have raiſed our notion of this infinite being as high as it is poſſible for the mind of man to go, it will fall infinitely ſhort of what he really is. There is no end of his greatneſs: the moſt exalted creature he has made, is only capable of adoring it, none but himſelf can comprehend it.

The advice of the ſon of Sirach is very juſt and ſublime in this light. "By his word all things "conſiſt. We may ſpeak much, and yet come "ſhort: wherefore in ſum, he is all. How ſhall "we be able to magnify him? For he is great a-"bove all his works. The Lord is terrible and "very great; and marvellous in his power. When "you glorify the Lord, exalt him as much as you "can; for even yet will he far exceed. And, "when you exalt him, put forth all your ſtrength, "and be not weary; for you can never go far e-"nough. Who hath ſeen him, that he might tell

" us? and who can magnify him as he is? There " are yet hid greater things than these be, for we " have seen but a few of his works."

I have here only considered the supreme being by the light of reason and philosophy. If we would see him in all the wonders of his mercy, we must have recourse to revelation, which represents him to us, not only as infinitely great and glorious, but as infinitely good and just in his dispensations towards man. But as this is a theory which falls under every one's consideration, though indeed it can never be sufficiently considered, I shall here only take notice of that habitual worship and veneration which we ought to pay to this almighty being. We should often refresh our minds with the thought of him, and annihilate ourselves before him, in the contemplation of our own worthlessness, and of his transcendent excellency and perfection. This would imprint in our minds such a constant and uninterrupted awe and veneration as that which I am here recommending, and which is in reality a kind of incessant prayer, and reasonable humiliation of the soul before him who made it.

This would effectually kill in us all the little seeds of pride, vanity, and self-conceit, which are apt to shoot up in the minds of such whose thoughts turn more on those comparative advantages which they enjoy over some of their fellow-creatures, than on that infinite distance which is placed between them and the supreme model of all perfection. It would likewise quicken our desires and endeavours of uniting ourselves to him by all the acts of religion and virtue.

Such an habitual homage to the supreme being would, in a particular manner, banish from among

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us that prevailing impiety of uſing his name on the moſt trivial occaſions.

I find the following paſſage in an excellent ſermon, preached at the funeral of a Gentleman who was an honour to his country, and a more diligent as well as ſucceſsful inquirer into the works of nature, than any other our nation has ever produced. "He had the profoundeſt veneration for the Great "God of heaven and earth that I have ever obſerved in any perſon. The very name of God was "never mentioned by him without a pauſe and a "viſible ſtop in his diſcourſe; in which, one that "knew him moſt particularly above twenty years, "has told me, that he was ſo exact, that he does "not remember to have obſerved him once to fail "in it."

Every one knows the veneration which was paid by the Jews to a name ſo great, wonderful and holy. They would not let it enter even into their religious diſcourſes. What can we then think of thoſe who make uſe of ſo tremenduous a name in the ordinary expreſſions of their anger, mirth, and moſt impertinent paſſions? Of thoſe who admit it into the moſt familiar queſtions and aſſertions, ludicrous phraſes and works of humour? not to mention thoſe who violate it by ſolemn perjuries? It would be an affront to reaſon to endeavour to ſet forth the horror and profaneneſs of ſuch a practice. The very mention of it expoſes it ſufficiently to thoſe in whom the light of nature, not to ſay, religion, is not utterly extinguiſhed. O

——————Deum namque ire per omnes
Terraſque, tractuſque maris, cœlumque profundum.
VIRG. Georg. 4. V. 221.

For God the whole created Maſs inſpires:
Thro' Heaven, and Earth, and Ocean's Depths he throws
His Influence round, and kindles as he goes.
DRYDEN.

I Was yeſterday, about ſun-ſet, walking in the open field, 'till the night inſenſibly fell upon me. I at firſt amuſed myſelf with all the richneſs and variety of colours which appeared in the Weſtern parts of heaven: in proportion as they faded away and went out, ſeveral ſtars and planets appeared one after another, 'till the whole firmament was in a glow. The blueneſs of the æther was exceedingly heightened and enlivened by the ſeaſon of the year, and by the rays of all thoſe luminaries, that paſſed through it. The Galaxy appeared in its moſt beautiful white. To complete the ſcene, the full moon roſe at length in that clouded majeſty, which Milton takes notice of, and opened to the eye a new picture of nature, which was more finely ſhaded, and diſpoſed among ſofter lights, than that which the ſun had before diſcovered to us.

As I was ſurveying the moon walking in her brightneſs, and taking her progreſs among the conſtellations, a thought roſe in me which I believe very often perplexes and diſturbs men of ſerious and contemplative natures. David himſelf fell into it in that reflexion: "When I conſider the "heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and "the ſtars which thou haſt ordained; what is man "that thou art mindful of him, and the ſon of man "that thou regardeſt him!" In the ſame manner, when I conſidered that infinite hoſt of ſtars, or, to ſpeak more philoſophically, of ſuns, which were then ſhining upon me, with thoſe innumerable ſets

ſets of planets or worlds, which were moving round their reſpective ſuns; when I ſtill enlarged the idea, and ſuppoſed another heaven of ſuns and worlds riſing ſtill above this which we diſcovered, and theſe ſtill enlightened by a ſuperior firmament of luminaries, which are planted at ſo great a diſtance, that they may appear to the inhabitants of the former as the ſtars do to us; in ſhort, while I purſued this thought, I could not but reflect on that little inſignificant figure which I myſelf bore amidſt the immenſity of God's works.

Were the ſun, which enlightens this part of the creation, with all the hoſt of planetary worlds that move about him, utterly extinguiſhed and annihilated; they would not be miſſed more than a grain of ſand upon the ſea-ſhore. The ſpace they poſſeſs is ſo exceedingly little, in compariſon of the whole, that it would ſcarce make a blank in the creation. The chaſm would be imperceptible to an eye, that could take in the whole compaſs of nature, and paſs from one end of the creation to the other; as it is poſſible there may be ſuch a ſenſe in ourſelves hereafter, or in creatures which are at preſent more exalted than ourſelves. We ſee many ſtars, by the help of glaſſes, which we do not diſcover with our naked eyes; and the finer our teleſcopes are, the more ſtill are our diſcoveries. Huygenius carries this thought ſo far, that he does not think it impoſſible there may be ſtars whoſe light is not yet travelled down to us, ſince their firſt creation. There is no queſtion but the univerſe has certain bounds ſet to it; but when we conſider that it is the work of infinite power, prompted by infinite goodneſs, with an infinite ſpace to exert itſelf in, how can our imagination ſet any bounds to it?

To return therefore to my firſt thought, I could not but look upon myſelf with ſecret horror, as a

being that was not worth the ſmalleſt regard of one who had ſo great a work under his care and ſuperintendency. I was afraid of being over-looked amidſt the immenſity of nature, and loſt among that infinite variety of creatures, which, in all probability, ſwarm through all theſe immeaſurable regions of matter.

In order to recover myſelf from this mortifying thought, I conſidered that it took its riſe from thoſe narrow conceptions, which we are apt to entertain of the divine nature. We ourſelves cannot attend to many different objects at the ſame time. If we are careful to inſpect ſome things, we muſt of courſe neglect others. This imperfection which we obſerve in ourſelves, is an imperfection that cleaves in ſome degree to creatures of the higheſt capacities, as they are creatures, that is, beings of finite and limited natures. The preſence of every created being is confined to a certain meaſure of ſpace, and conſequently his obſervation is ſtinted to a certain number of objects. The ſphere in which we move, and act, and underſtand, is of a wider circumference to one creature than another, according as we riſe one above another in the ſcale of exiſtence. But the wideſt of theſe our ſpheres has its circumference. When therefore we reflect on the divine nature, we are ſo uſed and accuſtomed to this imperfection in ourſelves, that we cannot forbear in ſome meaſure aſcribing it to him in whom there is no ſhadow of imperfection. Our reaſon indeed aſſures us that his attributes are infinite, but the poorneſs of our conceptions is ſuch that it cannot forbear ſetting bounds to every thing it contemplates, till our reaſon comes again to our ſuccour, and throws down all thoſe little prejudices which riſe in us unawares, and are natural to the mind of man.

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We ſhall therefore utterly extinguiſh this melancholly thought, of our being overlooked by our Maker in the multiplicity of his works, and the infinity of thoſe objects among which he ſeems to be inceſſantly employed, if we conſider, in the firſt place, that he is omnipreſent; and, in the ſecond, that he is omniſcient.

If we conſider him in his omnipreſence: his being paſſes through, actuates, and ſupports the whole frame of nature. His creation, and every part of it, is full of him. There is nothing he has made, that is either ſo diſtant, ſo little, or ſo inconſiderable, which he does not eſſentially inhabit. His ſubſtance is within the ſubſtance of every being, whether material or immaterial, and as intimately preſent to it, as that being is to itſelf. It would be an imperfection in him, were he able to remove out of one place into another, or to withdraw himſelf from any thing he has created, or from any part of that ſpace which is diffuſed and ſpread abroad to infinity. In ſhort, to ſpeak of him in the language of the old philoſopher, he is a being whoſe center is everywhere, and his circumference nowhere.

In the ſecond place, he is omniſcient as well as omnipreſent. His omniſcience indeed neceſſarily and naturally flows from his omnipreſence; he cannot but be conſcious of every motion that ariſes in the whole material world, which he thus eſſentially pervades, and of every thought that is ſtirring in the intellectual world, to every part of which he is thus intimately united. Several moraliſts have conſidered the creation as the temple of God, which he has built with his own hands, and which is filled with his preſence. Others have conſidered infinite ſpace as the receptacle, or rather the habitation of the Almighty: but the nobleſt and

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moſt exalted way of conſidering this infinite ſpace is that of Sir Iſaac Newton, who calls it the ſenſorium of the Godhead. Brutes and men have their ſenſoriola, or little ſenſoriums, by which they apprehend the preſence, and perceive the actions of a few objects, that ly contiguous to them. Their knowledge and obſervation turns within a very narrow circle. But as God Almighty cannot but perceive and know every thing in which he reſides, infinite ſpace gives room to infinite knowledge, and is, as it were, an organ to omniſcience.

Were the ſoul ſeparate from the body, and with one glance of thought ſhould ſtart beyond the bounds of the creation, ſhould it for millions of years continue its progreſs through infinite ſpace with the ſame activity, it would ſtill find itſelf within the embrace of its Creator, and encompaſſed round with the immenſity of the Godhead. While we are in the body he is not leſs preſent with us, becauſe he is concealed from us. "O "that I knew where I might find him! ſays Job. "Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and "backward, but I cannot perceive him. On the "left hand, where he does work, but I cannot "behold him: He hideth himſelf on the right "hand that I cannot ſee him." In ſhort, reaſon as well as revelation aſſures us, that he cannot be abſent from us notwithſtanding he is undiſcovered by us.

In this conſideration of God Almighty's omnipreſence and omniſcience every uncomfortable thought vaniſhes. He cannot but regard every thing that has being, eſpecially ſuch of his creatures who fear they are not regarded by him. He is privy to all their thoughts, and to that anxiety of heart in particular, which is apt to trouble them on this

this occaſion: for, as it is impoſſible he ſhould overlook any of his creatures, ſo we may be confident that he regards, with an eye of mercy, thoſe who endeavour to recommend themſelves to his notice, and in an unfeigned humility of heart think themſelves unworthy that he ſhould be mindful of them.

——*Coelum quid quaerimus ultra?* Luc. Lib. IX.

Than heav'n what further can we ſeek?

IN your paper of Friday the 9th inſtant, you had occaſion to conſider the ubiquity of the Godhead, and at the ſame time to ſhew, that as he is preſent to every thing, he cannot but be attentive to every thing, and privy to all the modes and parts of its exiſtence; or, in other words, that his omniſcience and omnipreſence are co-exiſtent, and run together through the whole infinitude of ſpace. This conſideration might furniſh us with many incentives to devotion, and motives to morality; but as this ſubject has been handled by ſeveral excellent writers, I ſhall conſider it in a light wherein I have not ſeen it placed by others.

Firſt, How diſconſolate is the condition of an intellectual being who is thus preſent with his Maker, but at the ſame time receives no extraordinary benefit or advantage from this his preſence!

Secondly, How deplorable is the condition of an intellectual being who feels no other effects from this his preſence but ſuch as proceed from divine wrath and indignation!

Thirdly, How happy is the condition of that intellectual being, who is ſenſible of his Maker's preſence from the ſecret effects of his mercy and loving-kindneſs!

Firſt,

First, How diſconſolate is the condition of an intellectual being, who is thus preſent with his Maker, but at the ſame time receives no extraordinary benefit or advantage from this his preſence! Every particle of matter is actuated by this almighty being which paſſes through it. The heavens and the earth, the ſtars and planets, move and gravitate by virtue of this great principle within them. All the dead parts of nature are invigorated by the the preſence of their Creator, and made capable of exerting their reſpective qualities. The ſeveral inſtincts, in the brute creation, do likewiſe operate and work towards the ſeveral ends which are agreeable to them by this divine energy. Man only, who does not co-operate with this Holy Spirit, and is unattentive to his preſence, receives none of thoſe advantages from it, which are perfective of his nature, and neceſſary to his well-being. The divinity is with him, and in him, and everywhere about him, but of no advantage to him. It is the ſame thing to a man without religion, as if there were no God in the world. It is indeed impoſſible for an infinite being to remove himſelf from any of his creatures, but though he cannot withdraw his eſſence from us, which would argue an imperfection in him, he can withdraw from us all the joys and conſolations of it. His preſence may perhaps be neceſſary to ſupport us in our exiſtence; but he may leave this our exiſtence to itſelf, with regard to its happineſs or miſery. For, in this ſenſe, he may caſt us away from his preſence, and take his Holy Spirit from us. This ſingle conſideration one would think ſufficient to make us open our hearts to all thoſe infuſions of joy and gladneſs which are ſo near at hand, and ready to be poured in upon us; eſpecially when we conſider, *Secondly*, The deplorable condition of an intellectual being, who

who feels no other effects from his Maker's preſence, but ſuch as proceed from divine wrath and indignation!

We may aſſure ourſelves, that the great Author of nature will not always be as one, who is indifferent to any of his creatures. Thoſe who will not feel him in his love, will be ſure at length to feel him in his diſpleaſure. And how dreadful is the condition of that creature, who is only ſenſible of the being of his Creator, by what he ſuffers from him! He is as eſſentially preſent in hell as in heaven, but the inhabitants of thoſe accurſed places behold him only in his wrath, and ſhrink within the flames to conceal themſelves from him. It is not in the power of imagination to conceive the fearful effects of omnipotence incenſed.

But I ſhall only conſider the wretchedneſs of an intellectual being, who, in this life, lies under the diſpleaſure of him, that, at all times, and in all places, is intimately united with him. He is able to diſquiet the ſoul, and vex it in all its faculties. He can hinder any of the greateſt comforts of life from refreſhing us, and give an edge to every one of its ſlighteſt calamities. Who then can bear the thought of being an out-caſt from his preſence, that is, from the comforts of it, or of feeling it only in its terrors? How pathetic is that expoſtulation of Job, when, for the trial of his patience, he was made to look upon himſelf in this deplorable condition! "Why haſt thou ſet me as a "mark againſt thee, ſo that I am become a bur-"den to myſelf?" But, *thirdly*, how happy is the condition of that intellectual being, who is ſenſible of his Maker's preſence from the ſecret effects of his mercy and living-kindneſs!

The bleſſed in heaven behold him face to face; that is, are as ſenſible of his preſence as we are

of

of the preſence of any perſon whom we look upon with our eyes. There is doubtleſs a faculty in ſpirits, by which they apprehend one another, as our ſenſes do material objects; and there is no queſtion but our ſouls, when they are diſembodied, or placed in glorified bodies, will, by this faculty, in whatever part of ſpace they reſide, be always ſenſible of the divine preſence. We, who have this veil of fleſh ſtanding between us and the world of ſpirits, muſt be content to know that the ſpirit of God is preſent with us, by the effects which he produceth in us. Our outward ſenſes are too groſs to apprehend him; we may however taſte and ſee how gracious he is, by his influence upon our minds, by thoſe virtuous thoughts which he awakens in us, by thoſe ſecret comforts and refreſhments which he conveys into our ſouls, and by thoſe raviſhing joys and inward ſatisfactions, which are perpetually ſpringing up, and diffuſing themſelves among all the thoughts of good men. He is lodged in our very eſſence, and is as a ſoul within the ſoul, to irradiate its underſtanding, rectify its will, purify its paſſions, and enliven all the powers of man. How happy therefore is an intellectual being, who, by prayer and meditation, by virtue and good works, opens this communication between God and his own ſoul! Though the whole creation frowns upon him, and all nature looks black about him, he has his light and ſupport within him, that are able to cheer his mind, and bear him up in the midſt of all thoſe horrors which encompaſs him. He knows that his helper is at hand, and is always nearer to him than any thing elſe can be, which is capable of annoying or terrifying him. In the midſt of calumny or contempt, he attends to that being who whiſpers better things within his ſoul, and whom he looks upon as his de-

defender, his glory, and the lifter up of his head. In his deepeſt ſolitude and retirement, he knows that he is in company with the greateſt of beings; and perceives within himſelf ſuch real ſenſations of his preſence, as are more delightful than any thing that can be met with in the converſation of his creatures. Even in the hour of death, he conſiders the pains of his diſſolution to be nothing elſe but the breaking down of that partition, which ſtands betwixt his ſoul, and the ſight of that being, who is always preſent with him, and is about to manifeſt itſelf to him in fulneſs of joy.

If we would be thus happy, and thus ſenſible of our Maker's preſence, from the ſecret effects of his mercy and goodneſs, we muſt keep ſuch a watch over all our thoughts, that, in the language of the Scripture, his ſoul may have pleaſure in us. We muſt take care not to grieve his Holy Spirit, and endeavour to make the meditations of our hearts always acceptable in his ſight, that he may delight thus to reſide and dwell in us. The light of nature could direct Seneca to this doctrine, in a very remarkable paſſage among his epiſtles; *Sacer ineſt in nobis ſpiritus bonorum malorumque cuſtos, et obſervator, et quemadmodum nos illum tractamus, ita et ille nos.* "There is a holy ſpirit reſiding in us, who watch-"es and obſerves both good and evil men, and will "treat us after the ſame manner that we treat "him." But I ſhall conclude this diſcourſe with thoſe more emphatical words in divine revelation, "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and "my Father will love him, and we will come un-"to him, and make our abode with him."

———Si verbo audacia detur,
Non metuam magni dixiſſe palatia cœli.
Ov. Met. Lib. I. V. 175.

This place, the brighteſt manſion of the ſky,
I'll call the palace of the Deity. DRYDEN.

SIR,

"I Conſidered in my two laſt letters that awful and tremenduous ſubject, the ubiquity or omnipreſence of the divine Being. I have ſhewn that he is equally preſent in all places throughout the whole extent of infinite ſpace. This doctrine is ſo agreeable to reaſon, that we meet with it in the writings of the enlightened Heathens, as I might ſhow at large, were it not already done by other hands. But though the Deity be thus eſſentially preſent through all the immenſity of ſpace, there is one part of it in which he diſcovers himſelf in a moſt tranſcendent and viſible glory. This is that place which is marked out in Scripture under the different appellations of paradiſe, the third heaven, the throne of God, and the habitation of his glory. It is here where the glorified body of our Saviour reſides, and where all the celeſtial hierarchies, and the innumerable hoſts of angels, are repreſented as perpetually ſurrounding the ſeat of God with hallelujahs and hymns of praiſe. This is that preſence of God which ſome of the divines call his glorious, and others his majeſtic preſence. He is indeed as eſſentially preſent in all other places as in this, but it is here where he reſides in a ſenſible magnificence, and in the midſt of thoſe ſplendors which can affect the imagination of created beings.

"It

" It is very remarkable that this opinion of God " Almighty's preſence in heaven, whether diſco- " vered by the light of nature, or by a general " tradition from our firſt parents, prevails among " all the nations of the world, whatſoever different " notions they entertain of the Godhead. If you " look into Homer, that is, the moſt antient of " the Greek writers, you ſee the ſupreme powers " ſeated in the heavens, and encompaſſed with in- " ferior deities, among whom the Muſes are re- " preſented as ſinging inceſſantly about his throne. " Who does not here ſee the main ſtrokes and " outlines of this great truth we are ſpeaking of? " The ſame doctrine is ſhadowed out in many other " Heathen authors, though, at the ſame time, " like ſeveral other revealed truths, daſhed and " adulterated with a mixture of fables and human " inventions. But to paſs over the notions of the " Greeks and Romans, thoſe more enlightened " parts of the Pagan world, we find there is ſcarce " a people among the late diſcovered nations who " are not trained up in an opinion, that heaven is " the habitation of the divinity whom they wor- " ſhip.

" As in Solomon's temple there was the *ſan-* " *ctum ſanctorum*, in which a viſible glory appear- " ed among the figures of the cherubims, and " into which none but the High-prieſt himſelf was " permitted to enter, after having made an atone- " ment for the ſins of the people; ſo if we con- " ſider the whole creation as one great temple, " there is in it this holy of holies, into which the " High-prieſt of our ſalvation entered, and took " his place among angels and archangels, after " having made a propitiation for the ſins of man- " kind.

"With how much ſkill muſt the throne of God "be erected? With what glorious deſigns is that "habitation beautified, which is contrived and "built by him who inſpired Hiram with wiſdom? "How great muſt be the majeſty of that place, "where the whole art of creation has been em- "ployed, and where God has choſen to ſhew him- "ſelf in the moſt magnificent manner? What "muſt be the architecture of infinite power un- "der the direction of infinite wiſdom? A ſpirit "cannot but be tranſported after an ineffable man- "ner, with the ſight of thoſe objects, which were "made to affect him by that being who knows "the inward frame of a ſoul, and how to pleaſe "and raviſh it in all its moſt ſecret powers and "faculties. It is to this majeſtic preſence of God, "we may apply thoſe beautiful expreſſions in ho- "ly writ: "Behold! even to the moon and it "ſhineth not; yea the ſtars are not pure in his "ſight." The light of the ſun, and all the glo- "ries of the world in which we live, are but as "weak and ſickly glimmerings, or rather dark- "neſs itſelf, in compariſon of thoſe ſplendors which "encompaſs the throne of God.

"As the glory of this place is tranſcendent be- "yond imagination, ſo probably is the extent of "it. There is light behind light, and glory "within glory. How far that ſpace may reach, "in which God thus appears in perfect majeſty, "we cannot poſſibly conceive. Though it is not "infinite, it may be indefinite; and though not "immeaſurable in itſelf, it may be ſo with regard "to any created eye or imagination. If he has "made theſe lower regions of matter ſo incon- "ceivably wide and magnificent for the habitation "of mortal and periſhable beings, how great may "we ſuppoſe the courts of his houſe to be, where

"he

" he makes his reſidence in a more eſpecial man-
" ner, and diſplays himſelf in the fulneſs of his
" glory, among an innumerable company of an-
" gels, and ſpirits of juſt men made perfect?

" This is certain, that our imaginations cannot
" be raiſed too high, when we think on a place
" where omnipotence and omniſcience have ſo ſi-
" gnally exerted themſelves; becauſe that they
" are able to produce a ſcene infinitely more great
" and glorious than what we are able to imagine.
" It is not impoſſible but, at the conſummation of
" all things, theſe outward apartments of nature,
" which are now ſuited to thoſe beings who in-
" habit them, may be taken in and added to that
" glorious place of which I am here ſpeaking;
" and by that means made a proper habitation for
" beings who are exempt from mortality, and
" cleared of their imperfections: for ſo the Scri-
" pture ſeems to intimate when it ſpeaks of new
" heavens and of a new earth, wherein dwelleth
" righteouſneſs.

" I have only conſidered this glorious place,
" with regard to the ſight and imagination, though
" it is highly probable that our other ſenſes may
" here likewiſe enjoy their higheſt gratifications.
" There is nothing which more raviſhes and tranſ-
" ports the ſoul, than harmony; and we have
" great reaſon to believe, from the deſcriptions of
" this place, in holy Scripture, that this is one of
" the entertainments of it. And if the ſoul of
" man can be ſo wonderfully affected with thoſe
" ſtrains of muſic, which human art is capable
" of producing, how much more will it be raiſed
" and elevated by thoſe, in which is exerted the
" whole power of harmony! The ſenſes are fa-
" culties of the human ſoul, though they cannot
" be employed, during this our vital union, with-

" out proper inſtruments in the body. Why " therefore ſhould we exclude the ſatisfaction of " theſe faculties, which we find by experience " are inlets of great pleaſure to the ſoul, from " among thoſe entertainments which are to make " up our happineſs hereafter? Why ſhould we " ſuppoſe that our hearing and ſeeing will not be " gratified with thoſe objects which are moſt a- " greeable to them, and which they cannot meet " with in theſe lower regions of nature; objects, " which neither eye hath ſeen, nor ear heard, nor " can it enter into the heart of man to conceive? " I knew a man in Chriſt (ſays St. Paul, ſpeak- " ing of himſelf) above fourteen years ago (whe- " ther in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out " of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) " ſuch a one caught up to the third heaven. And " I knew ſuch a man, (whether in the body, or " out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) " how that he was caught up into paradiſe, and " heard unſpeakable words, which it is not poſſible " for a man to utter. By this is meant, that what " he heard was ſo infinitely different from any " thing which he had heard in this world, that it " was impoſſible to expreſs it in ſuch words as " might convey a notion of it to his hearers.

" It is very natural for us to take delight in in- " quiries concerning any foreign country, where " we are ſome time or other to make our abode; " and as we all hope to be admitted into this glori- " ous place, it is both a laudable and uſeful curio- " ſity, to get what informations we can of it, " whilſt we make uſe of revelation for our guide. " When theſe everlaſting doors ſhall be open to us, " we may be ſure that the pleaſures and beauties " of this place will infinitely tranſcend our pre- " ſent hopes and expectations, and that the

" glorious

" glorious appearance of the throne of God will
" riſe infinitely beyond whatever we are able to con-
" ceive of it. We might here entertain ourſelves
" with many other ſpeculations on this ſubject,
" from thoſe ſeveral hints which we find of it in
" the holy Scriptures; as whether there may not be
" different manſions and apartments of glory, to
" beings of different natures; whether, as they
" excel one another in perfection, they are not ad-
" mitted nearer to the throne of the Almighty,
" and enjoy greater manifeſtations of his preſence;
" whether there are not ſolemn times and occaſi-
" ons, when all the multitude of heaven celebrate
" the preſence or their Maker in more extraordi-
" nary forms of praiſe and adoration; as Adam,
" though he had continued in a ſtate of innocence,
" would, in the opinion of our divines, have kept
" holy the ſabbath-day, in a more particular man-
" ner than any other of the ſeven. Theſe, and
" the like ſpeculations, we may very innocently in-
" dulge, ſo long as we make uſe of them to in-
" ſpire us with a deſire of becoming inhabitants of
" this delightful place.

" I have in this, and in two foregoing letters,
" treated on the moſt ſerious ſubject that can em-
" ploy the mind of man, the omnipreſence of the
" Deity; a ſubject which, if poſſible, ſhould ne-
" ver depart from our meditations. We have con-
" ſidered the divine Being, as he inhabits infini-
" tude, as he dwells among his works, as he is
" preſent to the mind of man, and as he diſcovers
" himſelf in a more glorious manner among the
" regions of the bleſt. Such a conſideration ſhould
" be kept awake in us at all times, and in all pla-
" ces, and poſſeſs our minds with a perpetual awe
" and reverence. It ſhould be interwoven with
" all our thoughts and perceptions, and become

" one

" one with the conſciouſneſs of our own being. " It is not to be reflected on in the coldneſs of " philoſophy, but ought to ſink us into the loweſt " proſtration before him, who is ſo aſtoniſhingly " great, wonderful and holy.

———Aſſiduo labuntur tempora motu
Non ſecus ac flumen. Neque enim conſiſtere flumen,
Nec levis hora poteſt: ſed ut unda impellitur unda,
Urgeturque prior venienti, urgetque priorem,
Tempora ſic fugiant pariter, pariterque ſequuntur;
Et nova ſunt ſemper. Nam quod fuit ante, relictum eſt;
Fitque quod haud fuerat: momentaque cuncta novantur.
Ov. Met. Lib. XIII. 179.

Ev'n times are in perpetual flux, and run,
Like rivers from their fountain, rowling on,
For time, no more than ſtreams, is at a ſtay;
The flying hour is ever on her way:
And as the fountain ſtill ſupplies her ſtore,
The wave behind impels the wave before;
Thus in ſucceſſive courſe the minutes run,
And urge their predeceſſor minutes on,
Still moving, ever new: for former things
Are ſet aſide, like abdicated Kings:
And every moment alters what is done,
And innovates ſome act, till then unknown. DRYDEN.

WE conſider infinite ſpace as an expanſion without a circumference: we conſider eternity, or infinite duration, as a line that has neither a beginning nor end. In our ſpeculations of infinite ſpace, we conſider that particular place in which we exiſt, as a kind of center to the whole expanſion. In our ſpeculations of eternity, we conſider the time which is preſent to us as the middle, which divides the whole line into two equal parts. For this reaſon, many witty authors compare the preſent time to an iſthmus or narrow neck of land, that riſes in the midſt of an ocean, immeaſurably diffuſed on either ſide of it.

Philo-

Philoſophy, and indeed common ſenſe, naturally throws eternity under two diviſions; which we may call, in Engliſh, that eternity which is paſt, and that eternity which is to come. The learned terms of *aeternitas a parte ante*, and *aeternitas a parte poſt*, may be more amuſing to the reader, but can have no other idea affixed to them than what is conveyed to us by thoſe words, an eternity that is paſt, and an eternity that is to come. Each of theſe eternities is bounded at the one extreme; or, in other words, the former has an end, and the latter a beginning.

Let us firſt of all conſider that eternity which is paſt, reſerving that which is to come for the ſubject of another paper. The nature of this eternity is utterly inconceivable by the mind of man: our reaſon demonſtrates to us that it has been, but, at the ſame time, can frame no idea of it, but what is big with abſurdity and contradiction. We can have no other conception of any duration which is paſt, than that all of it was once preſent, and whatever was once preſent, is at ſome certain diſtance from us; and whatever is at any certain diſtance from us, be the diſtance never ſo remote, cannot be eternity. The very notion of any duration's being paſt, implies that it was once preſent; for the idea of being once preſent, is actually included in the idea of its being paſt. This therefore is a depth not to be ſounded by human underſtanding. We are ſure that there has been an eternity, and yet contradict ourſelves when we meaſure this eternity by any notion which we can frame of it.

If we go to the bottom of this matter, we ſhall find, that the difficulties we meet with in our conceptions of eternity, proceed from this ſingle reaſon, that we can have no other idea of any kind of duration, than that by which we ourſelves, and all

all other created beings, do exiſt; which is, a ſucceſſive duration made up of paſt, preſent, and to come. There is nothing which exiſts after this manner, all the parts of whoſe exiſtence were not once actually preſent, and conſequently may be reached by a certain number of years applied to it. We may aſcend as high as we pleaſe, and employ our being to that eternity which is to come, in adding millions of years to millions of years, and we can never come up to any fountain-head of duration, to any beginning in eternity: but, at the ſame time, we are ſure, that whatever was once preſent does ly within the reach of numbers, though perhaps we can never be able to put enough of them together for that purpoſe. We may as well ſay, that any thing may be actually preſent in any part of infinite ſpace, which does not ly at a certain diſtance from us, as that any part of infinite duration was once actually preſent, and does not alſo ly at ſome determined diſtance from us. The diſtance in both caſes may be immeaſurable and indefinite as to our faculties, but our reaſon tells us that it cannot be ſo in itſelf. Here therefore is that difficulty which human underſtanding is not capable of ſurmounting. We are ſure that ſomething muſt have exiſted from eternity, and are, at the ſame time, unable to conceive, that any thing which exiſts, according to our notion of exiſtence, can have exiſted from eternity.

It is hard for a reader, who has not rolled this thought in his own mind, to follow in ſuch an abſtracted ſpeculation; but I have been the longer on it, becauſe I think it is a demonſtrative argument of the being and eternity of a God: and though there are many other demonſtrations which lead us to this great truth, I do not think we ought to lay aſide any proofs in this matter which the light of reaſon

reaſon has ſuggeſted to us, eſpecially when it is ſuch a one as has been urged by men famous for their penetration and force of underſtanding, and which appears altogether concluſive to thoſe who will be at the pains to examine it.

Having thus conſidered that eternity which is paſt, according to the beſt idea we can frame of it, I ſhall now draw up thoſe ſeveral articles on this ſubject which are dictated to us by the light of reaſon, and which may be looked upon as the creed of a philoſopher in this great point.

Firſt, It is certain that no being could have made itſelf; for if ſo, it muſt have acted before it was, which is a contradiction.

Secondly, That therefore ſome being muſt have exiſted from all eternity.

Thirdly, That whatever exiſts after the manner of created beings, or according to any notions which we have of exiſtence, could not have exiſted from eternity.

Fourthly, That this eternal being muſt therefore be the great Author of nature, the Antient of days, who, being at an infinite diſtance in his perfections from all finite and created beings, exiſts in a quite different manner from them, and in a manner of which they can have no idea.

I know that ſeveral of the ſchoolmen, who would not be thought ignorant of any thing, have pretended to explain the manner of God's exiſtence, by telling us, that he comprehends infinite duration in every moment; that eternity is with him a *punctum ſtans*, a fixed point; or, which is as good ſenſe, an infinite inſtant; that nothing with reference to his exiſtence is either paſt or to come: to which the ingenious Mr. Cowley alludes in his deſcription of heaven,

Nothing

Nothing is there to come, and nothing paſt,
But an eternal Now *does always laſt.*

For my own part, I look upon theſe propoſitions as words that have no ideas annexed to them; and think men had better own their ignorance, than advance doctrines by which they mean nothing, and which indeed are ſelf-contradictory. We cannot be too modeſt in our diſquiſitions, when we meditate on him who is invironed with ſo much glory and perfection, who is the ſource of being, the fountain of all that exiſtence which we and his whole creation derive from him. Let us therefore, with the utmoſt humility, acknowledge, that as ſome being muſt neceſſarily have exiſted from eternity, ſo this being does exiſt after an incomprehenſible manner, ſince it is impoſſible for a being to have exiſted from eternity after our manner or notions of exiſtence. Revelation confirms theſe natural dictates of reaſon in the accounts which it gives us of the divine exiſtence, where it tells us, that he is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever; that he is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending; that a thouſand years are with him as one day, and one day as a thouſand years; by which and the like expreſſions we are taught, that his exiſtence, with relation to time or duration, is infinitely different from the exiſtence of any of his creatures, and conſequently that it is impoſſible for us to frame any adequate conceptions of it.

In the firſt revelation which he makes of his own being, he intitles himſelf, I am that I am; and when Moſes deſires to know what name he ſhall give him, in his embaſſy to Pharaoh, he bids him ſay that I AM hath ſent you. Our great Creator, by this revelation of himſelf, does in a manner exclude every thing elſe from a real exiſtence, and di-

diſtinguiſhes himſelf from his creatures, as the only being which truly and really exiſts. The antient Platonic notion, which was drawn from ſpeculations of eternity, wonderfully agrees with this revelation which God has made of himſelf. There is nothing, ſay they, which in reality exiſts, whoſe exiſtence, as we call it, is pieced up of paſt, preſent, and to come. Such a flitting and ſucceſſive exiſtence is rather a ſhadow of exiſtence, and ſomething which is like it, than exiſtence itſelf. He only properly exiſts whoſe exiſtence is entirely preſent; that is, in other words, who exiſts in the moſt perfect manner, and in ſuch a manner, as we have no idea of.

I ſhall conclude this ſpeculation with one uſeful inference. How can we ſufficiently proſtrate ourſelves and fall down before our Maker, when we conſider that ineffable goodneſs and wiſdom which contrived this exiſtence for finite natures? What muſt be the overflowings of that good-will, which prompted our Creator to adapt exiſtence to beings, in whom it is not neceſſary? eſpecially when we conſider that he himſelf was before in the compleat poſſeſſion of exiſtence and of happineſs, and in the full enjoyment of eternity. What man can think of himſelf as called out, and ſeparated, from nothing, of his being made a conſcious, a reaſonable and a happy creature; in ſhort, of being taken in as a ſharer of exiſtence, and a kind of partner in eternity, without being ſwallowed up in wonder, in praiſe, and adoration! It is indeed a thought too big for the mind of man, and rather to be entertained in the ſecrecy of devotion, and in the ſilence of the ſoul, than to be expreſſed by words. The ſupreme being has not given us powers or faculties ſufficient to extol and magnify ſuch unutterable goodneſs.

It is however ſome comfort to us, that we ſhall be always doing what we ſhall be never able to do, and that a work which cannot be finiſhed, will however be the work of an eternity.

SECTION II.

The Power and Wiſdom of GOD *in the* CREATION.

Inde hominum pecudumque genus, vitaeque volantum,
Et quae marmoreo fert monſtra ſub aequore pontus.
VIRG. Aen. VI. V. 728.

Hence men and beaſts the breath of life obtain,
And birds of air, and monſters of the main. DRYDEN.

THOUGH there is a great deal of pleaſure in contemplating the material world, by which I mean that ſyſtem of bodies into which nature has ſo curiouſly wrought the maſs of dead matter, with the ſeveral relations which thoſe bodies bear to one another; there is ſtill, methinks, ſomething more wonderful and ſurpriſing in contemplations on the world of life, by which, I mean, all thoſe animals with which every part of the univerſe is furniſhed. The material world is only the ſhell of the univerſe; the world of life are its inhabitants.

If we conſider thoſe parts of the material world which ly the neareſt to us, and are therefore ſubject to our obſervations and inquiries, it is amazing to conſider the infinity of animals with which it is ſtocked. Every part of matter is peopled: every green leaf ſwarms with inhabitants. There is ſcarce a ſingle humour in the body of a man, or of any other animal, in which our glaſſes do not diſcover myriads of living creatures. The ſurface of animals

animals is alſo covered with other animals, which are in the ſame manner the baſis of other animals that live upon it; nay, we find in the moſt ſolid bodies, as in marble itſelf, innumerable cells and cavities that are crowded with ſuch imperceptible inhabitants, as are too little for the naked eye to diſcover. On the other hand, if we look into the more bulky parts of nature, we ſee the ſeas, lakes and rivers teeming with numberleſs kinds of living creatures: we find every mountain and marſh, wilderneſs and wood, plentifully ſtocked with birds and beaſts, and every part of matter affording proper neceſſaries and conveniencies for the livelihood of multitudes which inhabit it.

The author of the plurality of worlds draws a very good argument from this conſideration, for the peopling of every planet; as indeed it ſeems very probable from the analogy of reaſon, that if no part of matter, which we are acquainted with, lies waſte and uſeleſs, thoſe great bodies which are at ſuch a diſtance from us, ſhould not be deſart and unpeopled, but rather that they ſhould be furniſhed with beings adapted to their reſpective ſituations.

Exiſtence is a bleſſing to thoſe beings only which are endued with perception, and is in a manner thrown away upon dead matter, any further than as it is ſubſervient to beings which are conſcious of their exiſtence. Accordingly we find, from the bodies which ly under our obſervation, that matter is only made as the baſis and ſupport of animals, and that there is no more of the one, than what is neceſſary for the exiſtence of the other.

Infinite goodneſs is of ſo communicative a nature, that it ſeems to delight in the conferring of exiſtence upon every degree of perceptive being. As this is a ſpeculation, which I have often pur-

ſued with great pleaſure to myſelf, I ſhall enlarge farther upon it, by conſidering that part of the ſcale of beings which comes within our knowledge.

There are ſome living creatures which are raiſed but juſt above dead matter. To mention only that ſpecies of ſhell-fiſh, which are formed in the faſhion of a cone, that grow to the ſurface of ſeveral rocks, and immediately dy upon their being ſevered from the place where they grow. There are many other creatures but one remove from theſe, which have no other ſenſe beſides that of feeling and taſte. Others have ſtill an additional one of hearing; others of ſmell, and others of ſight. It is wonderful to obſerve, by what a gradual progreſs the world of life advances through a prodigious variety of ſpecies, before a creature is formed that is compleat in all its ſenſes; and even among theſe there is ſuch a different degree of perfection in the ſenſe which one animal enjoys beyond what appears in another, that though the ſenſe in different animals be diſtinguiſhed by the ſame common denomination, it ſeems almoſt of a different nature. If after this we look into the ſeveral inward perfections of cunning and ſagacity, or what we generally call inſtinct, we find them riſing after the ſame manner, imperceptibly one above another, and receiving additional improvements according to the ſpecies in which they are implanted. This progreſs in nature is ſo very gradual, that the moſt perfect of an inferior ſpecies comes very near to the moſt imperfect of that which is immediately above it.

The exuberant and overflowing goodneſs of the ſupreme Being, whoſe mercy extends to all his works, is plainly ſeen, as I have before hinted, from his having made ſo very little matter, at leaſt what falls within our knowledge, that does not

ſwarm

ſwarm with life: Nor is his goodneſs leſs ſeen in the diverſity, than in the multitude of living creatures. Had he only made one ſpecies of animals, none of the reſt would have enjoyed the happineſs of exiſtence; he has, therefore, ſpecified in his creation every degree of life, every capacity of being. The whole chaſm in nature, from a plant to a man, is filled up with divers kinds of creatures, riſing one over another, by ſuch a gentle and eaſy aſcent, that the little tranſitions and deviations from one ſpecies to another, are almoſt inſenſible. This intermediate ſpace is ſo well huſbanded and managed, that there is ſcarce a degree of perception which does not appear in ſome one part of the world of life. Is the goodneſs or wiſdom of the divine Being more manifeſted in this his proceeding?

There is a conſequence, beſides thoſe I have already mentioned, which ſeems very naturally deducible from the foregoing conſiderations. If the ſcale of being riſes by ſuch a regular progreſs, ſo high as man, we may by a parity of reaſon ſuppoſe, that it ſtill proceeds gradually through thoſe beings which are of a ſuperior nature to him; ſince there is an infinitely greater ſpace and room for different degrees of perfection, between the ſupreme Being and man, than between man and the moſt deſpicable inſect. This conſequence of ſo great a variety of beings which are ſuperior to us, from that variety which is inferior to us, is made by Mr. Locke, in a paſſage which I ſhall here ſet down, after having premiſed, that notwithſtanding there is ſuch infinite room between man and his Maker, for the creative power to exert itſelf in, it is impoſſible that it ſhould ever be filled up, ſince there will be ſtill an infinite gap or diſtance

between the higheſt created being, and the power which produced him.

" That there ſhould be more ſpecies of intel-
" ligent creatures above us, than there are of
" ſenſible and material below us, is probable to
" me from hence; That in all the viſible corpo-
" real world, we ſee no chaſms, or no gaps. All
" quite down from us, the deſcent is by eaſy
" ſteps, and a continued ſeries of things, that
" in each remove differ very little one from the
" other. There are fiſhes that have wings, and
" are not ſtrangers to the airy region: and there
" are ſome birds, that are inhabitants of the wa-
" ter; whoſe blood is cold as fiſhes, and their
" fleſh ſo like in taſte, that the ſcrupulous are
" allowed them on fiſh-days. There are ani-
" mals ſo near of kin both to birds and beaſts,
" that they are in the middle between both: am-
" phibious animals link the terreſtrial and aqua-
" tic together; ſeals live at land and at ſea, and
" porpoiſes have the warm blood and entrails of
" a hog; not to mention what is confidently re-
" ported of mermaids or ſea-men. There are
" ſome brutes, that ſeem to have as much know-
" ledge and reaſon, as ſome that are called men;
" and the animal and vegetable kingdoms are ſo
" nearly joined, that if you will take the loweſt
" of one, and the higheſt of the other, there
" will ſcarce be perceived any great difference
" between them: and ſo on till we come to the
" loweſt and the moſt inorganical parts of mat-
" ter, we ſhall find everywhere that the ſeve-
" ral ſpecies are linked together, and differ but
" in almoſt inſenſible degrees. And when we
" conſider the infinite power and wiſdom of the
" Maker, we have reaſon to think that it is ſuit-
" able to the magnificent harmony of the uni-
" verſe,

" verſe, and the great deſign and infinite good-
" neſs of the Architect, that the ſpecies of crea-
" tures ſhould alſo, by gentle degrees, aſcend up-
" ward from us toward his infinite perfection, as
" we ſee they gradually deſcend from us down-
" wards: which if it be probable, we have rea-
" ſon then to be perſuaded, that there are far
" more ſpecies of creatures above us, than there
" are beneath; we being in degrees of perfecti-
" on much more remote from the infinite being
" of God, than we are from the loweſt ſtate of
" being, and that which approaches neareſt to
" nothing. And yet of all thoſe diſtinct ſpecies,
" we have no clear diſtinct ideas."

In this ſyſtem of being, there is no creature ſo wonderful in its nature, and which ſo much deſerves our particular attention, as man, who fills up the middle ſpace between the animal and intellectual nature, the viſible and inviſible world, and is that link in the chain of beings, which has been often termed the *nexus utriuſque mundi*. So that he who in one reſpect is aſſociated with angels and archangels, may look upon a being of infinite perfection as his father, and the higheſt order of ſpirits as his brethren, may in another reſpect ſay to corruption, thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my ſiſter.

————*Facies non omnibus una,*
Nec diverſa tamen———— Ovid. Met. Lib. II. V. 13.

Tho' various features diff'rent aſpects grace,
A certain likeneſs is in ev'ry face.

THOSE who were ſkilful in anatomy among the antients, concluded from the outward and inward make of an human body, that it was the work of a Being tranſcendently wiſe and powerful. As the world grew more enlightened in this art, their diſcoveries gave them freſh opportunities of admiring the conduct of Providence in the formation of an human body. Galen was converted by his diſſections, and could not but own a ſupreme Being upon a ſurvey of this his handy-work. There were, indeed, many parts of which the old anatomiſts did not know the certain uſe; but as they ſaw that moſt of thoſe which they examined were adapted with admirable art to their ſeveral functions, they did not queſtion but thoſe, whoſe uſes they could not determine, were contrived with the ſame wiſdom for reſpective ends and purpoſes. Since the circulation of the blood has been found out, and many other great diſcoveries have been made by our modern anatomiſts, we ſee new wonders in the human frame, and diſcern ſeveral important uſes for thoſe parts, which uſes the antients knew nothing of. In ſhort, the body of man is ſuch a ſubject as ſtands the utmoſt teſt of examination. Though it appears formed with the niceſt wiſdom, upon the moſt ſuperficial ſurvey of it, it ſtill mends upon the ſearch, and produces our ſurprize and amazement in proportion as we pry into it. What I have here ſaid of an human body, may be applied to the body

body of every animal, which has been the ſubject of anatomical obſervations.

The body of an animal is an object adequate to our ſenſes. It is a particular ſyſtem of Providence, that lies in a narrow compaſs. The eye is able to command it, and by ſucceſſive inquiries can ſearch into all its parts. Could the body of the whole earth, or indeed the whole univerſe, be thus ſubmitted to the examination of our ſenſes, were it not too big and diſproportioned for our inquiries, too unweildy for the management of the eye and hand, there is no queſtion but it would appear to us as curious and well contrived a frame as that of an human body. We ſhould ſee the ſame concatenation and ſubſerviency, the ſame neceſſity and uſefulneſs, the ſame beauty and harmony in all and every of its parts, as what we diſcover in the body of every ſingle animal.

The more extended our reaſon is, and the more able to grapple with immenſe objects, the greater ſtill are thoſe diſcoveries which it makes of wiſdom and providence in the work of the creation. A Sir Iſaac Newton, who ſtands up as the miracle of the preſent age, can look through a whole planetary ſyſtem; conſider it in its weight, number, and meaſure; and draw from it as many demonſtrations of infinite power and wiſdom, as a more confined underſtanding is able to deduce from the ſyſtem of an human body.

But to return to our ſpeculations on anatomy. I ſhall here conſider the fabrick and texture of the bodies of animals in one particular view; which, in my opinion, ſhews the hand of a thinking and all-wiſe being in their formation, with the evidence of a thouſand demonſtrations. I think we may lay this down as an inconteſted principle, that chance never acts in a perpetual uniformity and

and conſiſtence with itſelf. If one ſhould always fling the ſame number with ten thouſand dice, or ſee every throw juſt five times leſs, or five times more in number than the throw which immediately preceeded it, who would not imagine there is ſome inviſible power which directs the caſt? This is the proceeding which we find in the operations of nature. Every kind of animal is diverſified by different magnitudes, each of which gives riſe to a different ſpecies. Let a man trace the dog or lion kind, and he will obſerve how many of the works of nature are publiſhed, if I may uſe the expreſſion, in a variety of editions. If we look into the reptile world, or into thoſe different kinds of animals that fill the element of water, we meet with the ſame repetitions among ſeveral ſpecies, that differ very little from one another, but in ſize and bulk. You find the ſame creature that is drawn at large, copied out in ſeveral proportions, and ending in miniature. It would be tedious to produce inſtances of this regular conduct in Providence, as it would be ſuperfluous to thoſe who are verſed in the natural hiſtory of animals. The magnificent harmony of the univerſe is ſuch, that we may obſerve innumerable diviſions running upon the ſame ground. I might alſo extend this ſpeculation to the dead parts of nature, in which we may find matter diſpoſed into many ſimilar ſyſtems, as well in our ſurvey of ſtars and planets, as of ſtones, vegetables, and other ſublunary parts of the creation. In a word, Providence has ſhewn the richneſs of its goodneſs and wiſdom, not only in the production of many original ſpecies, but in the multiplicity of deſcants which it has made on every original ſpecies in particular.

But

But to purſue this thought ſtill farther: Every living creature, conſidered in itſelf, has many very complicated parts, that are exact copies of ſome other parts which it poſſeſſes, and which are complicated in the ſame manner. One eye would have been ſufficient for the ſubſiſtence and preſervation of an animal; but, in order to better his condition, we ſee another placed with a mathematical exactneſs in the ſame moſt advantageous ſituation, and in every particular of the ſame ſize and texture. Is it poſſible for chance to be thus delicate and uniform in her operations? Should a million of dice turn up twice together the ſame number, the wonder would be nothing in compariſon with this. But when we ſee this ſimilitude and reſemblance in the arm, the hand, the fingers; when we ſee one half of the body entirely correſpond with the other in all thoſe minute ſtrokes, without which a man might have very well ſubſiſted; nay, when we often ſee a ſingle part repeated an hundred times in the ſame body, notwithſtanding it conſiſts of the moſt intricate weaving of numberleſs fibres, and theſe parts differing ſtill in magnitude, as the convenience of their particular ſituation requires; ſure a man muſt have a ſtrange caſt of underſtanding, who does not diſcover the finger of God in ſo wonderful a work. Theſe duplicates in thoſe parts of the body, without which a man might have very well ſubſiſted, though not ſo well as with them, are a plain demonſtration of an all-wiſe contriver; as thoſe more numerous copyings, which are found among the veſſels of the ſame body, are evident demonſtrations that they could not be the work of chance. This argument receives additional ſtrength, if we apply it to every animal and inſect within our knowledge, as well as to thoſe numberleſs

berleſs living creatures that are objects too minute for a human eye: and if we conſider how the ſeveral ſpecies in this whole world of life reſemble one another, in very many particulars, ſo far as is convenient for their reſpective ſtates of exiſtence; it is much more probable that an hundred million of dice ſhould be caſually thrown a hundred million of times in the ſame number, than that the body of any ſingle animal ſhould be produced by the fortuitous concourſe of matter. And that the like chance ſhould ariſe in innumerable inſtances, requires a degree of credulity that is not under the direction of common ſenſe. We may carry this conſideration yet further, if we reflect on the two ſexes in every living ſpecies, with their reſemblances to each other, and thoſe particular diſtinctions that were neceſſary for the keeping up of this great world of life.

There are many more demonſtrations of a ſupreme Being, and of his tranſcendent wiſdom, power, and goodneſs in the formation of the body of a living creature; for which I refer my reader to other writings, particularly to the ſixth book of the poem, intitled *Creation*, where the anatomy of the human body is deſcribed with great perſpicuity and elegance. I have been particular on the thought which runs through this ſpeculation, becauſe I have not ſeen it enlarged upon by others.

O

Jupiter

Jupiter eſt quodcunque vides——————Lucan. Lib. IX.

All, all, where'er you look, is full of God.

I Had this morning a very valuable and kind preſent ſent me, of a tranſlated work of a moſt excellent foreign writer, who makes a very conſiderable figure in the learned and Chriſtian world. It is intitled, *A demonſtration of the exiſtence, wiſdom, and omnipotence of God, drawn from the knowledge of nature, particularly of man, and fitted to the meaneſt capacity*, by the Archbiſhop of *Cambray*, author of *Telemachus*, and tranſlated from the French by the ſame hand that engliſhed that excellent piece. This great author, in the writings which he has before produced, has manifeſted an heart full of virtuous ſentiments, great benevolence to mankind, as well as a ſincere and fervent piety towards his Creator. His talents and parts are a very great good to the world, and it is a pleaſing thing to behold the polite arts ſubſervient to religion, and recommending it from its natural beauty. Looking over the letters of my correſpondents, I find one which celebrates this treatiſe, and recommends it to my readers.

To the GUARDIAN.

SIR,

"I Think I have ſomewhere read, in the writings of one whom I take to be a friend of "yours, a ſaying which ſtruck me very much, "and, as I remember, it was to this purpoſe: "The exiſtence of a God is ſo far from being "a thing that wants to be proved, that I think "it the only thing of which we are certain." "This is a ſprightly and juſt expreſſion; how-

" ever, I dare ſay, you will not be diſpleaſed that " I put you in mind of ſaying ſomething on the " demonſtration of the Biſhop of Cambray. A " man of his talents views all things in a light " different from that in which ordinary men ſee " them, and the devout diſpoſition of his ſoul " turns all thoſe talents to the improvement of " the pleaſures of a good life. His ſtyle clothes " philoſophy in a dreſs almoſt poetic, and his " readers enjoy in full perfection the advantage, " while they are reading him, of being what he " is. The pleaſing repreſentation of the ani- " mal powers in the beginning of his work, and " his conſideration of the nature of man with " the addition of reaſon, in the ſubſequent diſ- " courſe, impreſſes upon the mind a ſtrong ſa- " tisfaction in itſelf, and gratitude towards him " who beſtowed that ſuperiority over the brute " world. Theſe thoughts had ſuch an effect up- " on the author himſelf, that he has ended his " diſcourſe with a prayer. This adoration has a " ſublimity in it befitting his character; and the " emotions of his heart flow from wiſdom and " knowledge. I thought it would be proper for " a Saturday's paper, and have tranſlated it, to " make you a preſent of it. I have not, as the " tranſlator was obliged to do, confined myſelf " to an exact verſion from the original, but have " endeavoured to expreſs the ſpirit of it, by ta- " king the liberty to render his thoughts in ſuch a " way as I ſhould have uttered them if they had " been mine own. It has been obſerved, that the " private letters of great men are the beſt pictures of " their ſouls, but certainly their private devotions " would be ſtill more inſtructive, and I know not " why they ſhould not be as curious and entertain- " ing.

" If

"If you inſert this prayer, I know not but I "may ſend you, for another occaſion, one uſed "by a very great wit of the laſt age, which has "alluſions to the errors of a very wild life, and "I believe you will think is written with an un-"common ſpirit. The perſon whom I mean was "an excellent writer, and the publication of this "prayer of his may be, perhaps, ſome kind of "antidote againſt the infection in his other wri-"tings. But this ſupplication of the Biſhop has "in it a more happy and untroubled ſpirit; it is "(if that is not ſaying ſomething too fond) the "worſhip of an angel concerned for thoſe who "had fallen, but himſelf ſtill in the ſtate of glory "and innocence. The book ends with an act of "devotion, to this effect.

"O my God! if the greater number of man-"kind do not diſcover thee in that glorious ſhow "of nature, which thou haſt placed before our "eyes, it is not becauſe thou art far from every "one of us; thou art preſent to us more than "any object which we touch with our hands; "but our ſenſes, and the paſſions which they pro-"duce in us, turn our attention from thee. Thy "light ſhines in the midſt of darkneſs, but the "darkneſs comprehends it not. Thou, O Lord! "doſt everywhere diſplay thyſelf. Thou ſhineſt "in all thy works, but art not regarded by heed-"leſs and unthinking man. The whole creation "talks aloud of thee, and echoes with the repeti-"tions of thy holy name. But ſuch is our inſen-"ſibility, that we are deaf to the great and uni-"verſal voice of nature. Thou art everywhere "about us, and within us; but we wander from "ourſelves, become ſtrangers to our own ſouls, "and do not apprehend thy preſence. O thou! "who art the eternal fountain of light and beau-

" ty, who art the Antient of days, without begin-
" ning and without end: O thou! who art the
" life of all that truly live, thoſe can never fail to
" find thee, who ſeek for thee within themſelves.
" But alas, the very gifts which thou beſtoweſt
" upon us, do ſo employ our thoughts, that they
" hinder us from perceiving the hand which con-
" veys them to us. We live by thee, and yet
" we live without thinking on thee; but, O Lord!
" what is life in the ignorance of thee? A dead
" unactive piece of matter, a flower that withers,
" a river that glides away, a palace that haſtens
" to its ruin, a picture made up of fading colours,
" a maſs of ſhining oar; ſtrike our imaginations,
" and make us ſenſible of their exiſtence. We re-
" gard them as objects capable of giving us plea-
" ſure, not conſidering that thou conveyeſt through
" them all the pleaſure which we imagine they
" give us. Such vain empty objects that are only
" the ſhadows of being, are proportioned to our
" low and grovelling thoughts. That beauty
" which thou haſt poured out on thy creation, is
" as a veil which hides thee from our eyes. As
" thou art a Being too pure and exalted to paſs
" through our ſenſes, thou art not regarded by
" men, who have debaſed their nature, and have
" made themſelves like to the beaſts that periſh.
" So infatuated are they, that, notwithſtanding
" they know what is wiſdom and virtue, which
" have neither ſound, nor colour, nor ſmell, nor
" taſte, nor figure, nor any other ſenſible quali-
" ty, they can doubt of thy exiſtence, becauſe
" thou art not apprehended by the groſſer organs
" of ſenſe. Wretches that we are! we conſider
" ſhadows as realities, and truth as a phantome.
" That which is nothing is all to us, and that
" which is all appears to us nothing. What do

" we

" we ſee in all nature but thee, O my God! thou,
" and only thou appeareſt in every thing. When
" I conſider thee, O Lord! I am ſwallowed up
" and loſt in contemplation of thee. Every thing
" beſides thee, even my own exiſtence, vaniſhes
" and diſappears in the contemplation of thee. I
" am loſt to myſelf, and fall into nothing, when
" I think on thee. The man who does not ſee
" thee, has beheld nothing; he who does not
" taſte thee, has a reliſh of nothing. His being
" is vain, and his life but a dream. Set up thy-
" ſelf, O Lord! ſet up thyſelf that we may be-
" hold thee. As wax conſumes before the fire,
" and as the ſmoak is driven away, ſo let thine
" enemies vaniſh out of thy preſence. How un-
" happy is that ſoul who, without the ſenſe of
" thee, has no God, no hope, no comfort to
" ſupport him? but how happy the man who
" ſearches, ſighs, and thirſts after thee! but he
" only is fully happy on whom thou lifteſt up
" the light of thy countenance, whoſe tears thou
" haſt wiped away, and who enjoys in thy lo-
" ving-kindneſs the completion of all his deſires.
" How long, how long, O Lord! ſhall I wait
" for that day, when I ſhall poſſeſs, in thy pre-
" ſence, fulneſs of joy and pleaſures for evermore?
" O my God! in this pleaſing hope, my bones
" rejoice and cry out, Who is like unto thee!
" my heart melts away, and my ſoul faints with-
" in me, when I look up to thee who art the
" God of my life, and my portion to all eter-
" nity."

SECTION III.

The PROVIDENCE *of* GOD.

Viſu carentem magna pars veri latet. Sen. in OEdip.

Great part of truth is hidden from the blind.

IT is very reaſonable to believe, that part of the pleaſure which happy minds ſhall enjoy in a future ſtate, will ariſe from an enlarged contemplation of the divine wiſdom in the government of the world, and a diſcovery of the ſecret and amazing ſteps of Providence, from the beginning to the end of time. Nothing ſeems to be an entertainment more adapted to the nature of man, if we conſider that curioſity is one of the ſtrongeſt and moſt laſting appetites implanted in us, and that admiration is one of our moſt pleaſing paſſions; and what a perpetual ſucceſſion of enjoyments will be afforded to both theſe, in a ſcene ſo large and various as ſhall then be laid open to our view in the ſociety of ſuperior ſpirits, who perhaps will join with us in ſo delightful a proſpect!

It is not impoſſible, on the contrary, that part of the puniſhment of ſuch as are excluded from bliſs, may conſiſt, not only in their being denied this privilege, but in having their appetites at the ſame time vaſtly increaſed, without any ſatisfaction afforded to them. In theſe, the vain purſuit of knowledge ſhall, perhaps, add to their infelicity, and bewilder them into labyrinths of error, darkneſs, diſtraction, and uncertainty of every thing but their own evil ſtate. Milton has thus repreſented the fallen angels reaſoning together in a kind of reſpite

ſpite from their torments, and creating to themſelves a new diſquiet amidſt their very amuſements; he could not properly have deſcribed the ſports of condemned ſpirits, without that caſt of horror and melancholy he has ſo judiciouſly mingled with them.

Others apart ſat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reaſon'd high
Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
Fixt fate, free-will, foreknowledge abſolute,
And found no end, in wand'ring mazes loſt.

In our preſent condition, which is a middle ſtate, our minds are, as it were, chequered with truth and falſhood; and as our faculties are narrow and our views imperfect, it is impoſſible but our curioſity muſt meet with many repulſes. The buſineſs of mankind in this life being rather to act than to know, their portion of knowledge is dealt to them accordingly.

From hence it is, that the reaſon of the inquiſitive has ſo long been exerciſed with difficulties, in accounting for the promiſcuous diſtribution of good and evil to the virtuous and the wicked in this world. From hence come all thoſe pathetical complaints of ſo many tragical events, which happen to the wiſe and the good; and of ſuch ſurpriſing proſperity, which is often the reward of the guilty and the fooliſh; that reaſon is ſometimes puzzled, and at a loſs what to pronounce upon ſo myſterious a diſpenſation.

Plato expreſſes his abhorrence of ſome fables of the poets, which ſeem to reflect on the gods as the authors of injuſtice; and lays it down as a principle, that whatever is permitted to befal a juſt man, whether poverty, ſickneſs, or any of thoſe things, which ſeem to be evils, ſhall either in life

or

or death conduce to his good. My reader will obſerve how agreeable this maxim is to what we find delivered by a greater authority. Seneca has written a diſcourſe purpoſely on this ſubject, in which he takes pains, after the doctrine of the Stoics, to ſhew, that adverſity is not in itſelf an evil; and mentions a noble ſaying of Demetrius, "That nothing "would be more unhappy than a man who had "never known affliction." He compares proſperity to the indulgence of a fond mother to a child which often proves his ruin; but the affection of the divine being to that of a wiſe father, who would have his ſons exerciſed with labour, diſappointment, and pain, that they might gather ſtrength, and improve their fortitude. On this occaſion the philoſopher riſes into that celebrated ſentiment, that there is not on earth a ſpectacle more worthy the regard of a Creator intent on his works, than a brave man ſuperior to his ſufferings; to which he adds, that it muſt be a pleaſure to Jupiter himſelf to look down from heaven, and ſee Cato amidſt the ruins of his country preſerving his integrity.

This thought will appear yet more reaſonable, if we conſider human life as a ſtate of probation, and adverſity as the poſt of honour in it, aſſigned often to the beſt and moſt ſelect ſpirits.

But what I would chiefly inſiſt on here, is, that we are not at preſent in a proper ſituation to judge of the counſels by which Providence acts, ſince but little arrives at our knowledge, and even that little we diſcern imperfectly; or, according to the elegant figure in holy writ, "We ſee but in part and "as in a glaſs darkly." It is to be conſidered, that Providence in its oeconomy regards the whole ſyſtem of time and things together, ſo that we cannot diſcover the beautiful connexions between incidents which ly widely ſeparated in time, and by loſing

loſing ſo many links of the chain, our reaſonings become broken and imperfect. Thus thoſe parts in the moral world which have not an abſolute, may yet have a relative beauty, in reſpect of ſome other parts concealed from us, but open to his eye, before whom paſt, preſent, and to come, are ſet together in one point of view: and thoſe events, the permiſſion of which ſeems now to accuſe his goodneſs, may, in the conſummation of things, both magnify his goodneſs, and exalt his wiſdom. And this is enough to check our preſumption, ſince it is in vain to apply our meaſures of regularity to matters of which we know neither the antecedents nor the conſequents, the beginning nor the end.

I ſhall relieve my readers from this abſtracted thought, by relating here a Jewiſh tradition concerning Moſes, which ſeems to be a kind of parable, illuſtrating what I have laſt mentioned. That great prophet, it is ſaid, was called up by a voice from heaven to the top of a mountain; where, in a conference with the ſupreme Being, he was permitted to propoſe to him ſome queſtions concerning his adminiſtration of the univerſe. In the midſt of this divine colloquy he was commanded to look down on the plain below. At the foot of the mountain there iſſued out a clear ſpring of water, at which a ſoldier alighted from his horſe to drink. He was no ſooner gone than a little boy came to the ſame place, and finding a purſe of gold which the ſoldier had dropped, took it up, and went away with it. Immediately after this came an infirm old man, weary with age and travelling, and having quenched his thirſt, ſat down to reſt himſelf by the ſide of the ſpring. The ſoldier miſſing his purſe returns to ſearch for it, and demands it of the old man, who affirms he had not ſeen it, and appeals to heaven in witneſs of his innocence.

nocence. The ſoldier, not believing his proteſtation, kills him. Moſes fell on his face with horror and amazement, when the divine voice thus prevented his expoſtulation; "Be not ſurpriſed, "Moſes, nor aſk why the Judge of the whole "earth has ſuffered this thing to come to paſs: "the child is the occaſion that the blood of the "old man is ſpilt; but know, that the old man "whom thou ſaweſt, was the murderer of that "child's father."

Πᾶσιν γὰρ εὐφρονοῦσι συμμαχεῖ τύχη. Frag. Vet. Po.

Fortune favours ſtill the wiſe and brave.

THE famous Gratian, in his little book wherein he lays down maxims for a man's advancing himſelf at court, adviſes his reader to aſſociate himſelf with the fortunate, and to ſhun the company of the unfortunate; which, notwithſtanding the baſeneſs of the precept to an honeſt mind, may have ſomething uſeful in it for thoſe who puſh their intereſt in the world. It is certain a great part of what we call good or ill fortune, riſes out of right or wrong meaſures and ſchemes of life. When I hear a man complain of his being unfortunate in all his undertakings, I ſhrewdly ſuſpect him for a very weak man in his affairs. In conformity with this way of thinking, Cardinal Richlieu uſed to ſay, that unfortunate and imprudent were but two words for the ſame thing. As the Cardinal himſelf had a great ſhare both of prūdence and good-fortune, his famous antagoniſt, the Count d'Olivarez, was diſgraced at the court of Madrid, becauſe it was alledged againſt him that he had never any ſucceſs in his undertakings. This, ſays an eminent author, was indirectly accuſing him of imprudence.

Cicero

Cicero recommended Pompey to the Romans for their General upon three accounts, as he was a man of courage, conduct, and good-fortune. It was, perhaps, for the reaſon abovementioned, namely, that a ſeries of good fortune ſuppoſes a prudent management in the perſon whom it befals, that not only Sylla the Dictator, but ſeveral of the Roman Emperors, as is ſtill to be ſeen upon their medals, among their other titles, gave themſelves that of Felix or fortunate. The Heathens, indeed, ſeem to have valued a man more for his good fortune than for any other quality, which, I think, is very natural for thoſe who have not a ſtrong belief of another world. For how can I conceive a man crowned with many diſtinguiſhing bleſſings, that has not ſome extraordinary fund of merit and perfection in him, which lies open to the ſupreme eye, though perhaps it is not diſcovered by my obſervation: What is the reaſon Homer's and Virgil's heroes do not form a reſolution, or ſtrike a blow, without the conduct and direction of ſome deity? doubtleſs, becauſe the poets eſteemed it the greateſt honour to be favoured by the gods, and thought the beſt way of praiſing a man was to recount thoſe favours which naturally implied an extraordinary merit in the perſon on whom they deſcended.

Thoſe who believe a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments act very abſurdly, if they form their opinions of a man's merit from his ſucceſſes. But certainly, if I thought the whole circle of our being was concluded between our births and deaths, I ſhould think a man's good fortune the meaſure and ſtandard of his real merit, ſince Providence would have no opportunity of rewarding his virtue and perfections, but in the preſent life. A virtuous unbeliever, who lies under the preſſure of misfortunes, has reaſon to cry out, as they ſay Brutus did,

did, a little before his death, "O virtue! I have "worſhipped thee as a ſubſtantial good, but I find "thou art an empty name."

But to return to our firſt point: though prudence does undoubtedly, in a great meaſure, produce our good or ill-fortune in the world, it is certain there are many unforeſeen accidents and occurrences, which very often pervert the fineſt ſchemes that can be laid by human wiſdom. The race is not always to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong. Nothing leſs than infinite wiſdom can have an abſolute command over fortune; the higheſt degree of it which man can poſſeſs, is by no means equal to fortuitous events, and to ſuch contingencies as may riſe in the proſecution of our affairs. Nay, it very often happens, that prudence, which has always in it a great mixture of caution, hinders a man from being ſo fortunate as he might poſſibly have been without it. A perſon who only aims at what is likely to ſucceed, and follows cloſely the dictates of human prudence, never meets with thoſe great and unforeſeen ſucceſſes, which are often the effect of a ſanguine temper, or a more happy raſhneſs; and this perhaps may be the reaſon, that according to the common obſervation, fortune, like other females, delights rather in favouring the young than the old.

Upon the whole, ſince man is ſo ſhort-ſighted a creature, and the accidents which may happen to him ſo various, I cannot but be of Dr. Tillotſon's opinion in another caſe, that were there any doubt of a Providence, yet it certainly would be very deſirable there ſhould be ſuch a being of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, on whoſe direction we might rely in the conduct of human life.

It is a great preſumption to aſcribe our ſucceſſes to our own management, and not to eſteem ourſelves

ſelves upon any bleſſing, rather as it is the bounty of heaven, than the acquiſition of our own prudence. I am very well pleaſed with a medal which was ſtruck by Queen Elizabeth, a little after the defeat of the invincible Armada, to perpetuate the memory of that extraordinary event. It is well known how the King of Spain, and others, who were the enemies of that great Princeſs, to derogate from her glory, aſcribed the ruin of their fleet rather to the violence of ſtorms and tempeſts, than to the bravery of the Engliſh. Queen Elizabeth, inſtead of looking upon this as a diminution of her honour, valued herſelf upon ſuch a ſignal favour of Providence, and accordingly in the reverſe of the medal above mentioned has repreſented a fleet beaten by a tempeſt, and falling foul upon one another, with that religious inſcription, *afflavit Deus, et diſſipantur:* He blew with his wind, and they were ſcattered.

It is remarked of a famous Grecian General, whoſe name I cannot at preſent recollect, and who had been a particular favourite of fortune, that upon recounting his victories among his friends, he added at the end of ſeveral great actions, And in this fortune had no ſhare. After which it is obſerved in hiſtory, that he never proſpered in any thing he undertook.

As arrogance, and a conceitedneſs of our own abilities, are very ſhocking and offenſive to men of ſenſe and virtue, we may be ſure they are highly diſpleaſing to that Being who delights in an humble mind, and by ſeveral of his diſpenſations ſeems purpoſely to ſhow us, that our own ſchemes or prudence have no ſhare in our advancements.

Since on this ſubject I have already admitted ſeveral quotations which have occurred to my memory upon writing this paper, I will conclude it

with a little Perſian fable. A drop of water fell out of a cloud into the ſea, and finding itſelf loſt in ſuch an immenſity of fluid matter, broke out into the following reflexion: "Alas! what an "inſignificant creature am I in this prodigious oce-"an of waters; my exiſtence is of no concern to "the univerſe, I am reduced to a kind of nothing, "and am leſs than the leaſt of the works of God." It ſo happened that an oiſter which lay in the neighbourhood of this drop, chanced to gape and ſwallow it up in the midſt of this its humble ſoliloquy. The drop, ſays the fable, lay a great while hardening in the ſhell, 'till by degrees it was ripened into a pearl, which falling into the hands of a diver, after a long ſeries of adventures, is at preſent that famous pearl which is fixed on the top of the Perſian diadem. L.

Si fractus illabatur orbis
Impavidum ferient ruinae.

HOR. Lib. III. Od. 3. L. 7.

Should the whole frame of nature round him break,
In ruin and confuſion hurl'd,
He, unconcern'd, would hear the mighty crack,
And ſtand ſecure amidſt a falling World. ANON.

MAN, conſidered in himſelf, is a very helpleſs and a very wretched being. He is ſubject every moment to the greateſt calamities and misfortunes. He is beſet with dangers on all ſides, and may become unhappy by numberleſs caſualties, which he could not foreſee, nor have prevented, had he foreſeen them.

It is our comfort, while we are obnoxious to ſo many accidents, that we are under the care of one who directs contingencies, and has in his hands the management of every thing that is capable of an-

annoying or offending us; who knows the aſſiſtance we ſtand in need of, and is always ready to beſtow it on thoſe who aſk it of him.

The natural homage, which ſuch a creature bears to ſo infinitely wiſe and good a Being, is a firm reliance on him for the bleſſings and conveniencies of life, and an habitual truſt in him for deliverance out of all ſuch dangers and difficulties as may befal us.

The man, who always lives in this diſpoſition of mind, has not the ſame dark and melancholy views of human nature, as he who conſiders himſelf abſtractedly from this relation to the ſupreme Being. At the ſame time that he reflects upon his own weakneſs and imperfection, he comforts himſelf with the contemplation of thoſe divine attributes, which are employed for his ſafety and his welfare. He finds his want of foreſight made up by the omniſcience of him who is his ſupport. He is not ſenſible of his own want of ſtrength, when he knows that his helper is almighty. In ſhort, the perſon who has a firm truſt on the ſupreme Being, is powerful in his power, wiſe by his wiſdom, happy by his happineſs. He reaps the benefit of every divine attribute, and loſes his own inſufficiency in the fulneſs of infinite perfection.

To make our lives more eaſy to us, we are commanded to put our truſt in him, who is thus able to relieve and ſuccour us; the divine goodneſs having made ſuch a reliance a duty, notwithſtanding we ſhould have been miſerable had it been forbidden us.

Among ſeveral motives, which might be made uſe of to recommend this duty to us, I ſhall only take notice of thoſe that follow.

The firſt and ſtrongeſt is, that we are promiſed, he will not fail thoſe who put their truſt in him.

But without conſidering the ſupernatural bleſſing which accompanies this duty, we may obſerve that it has a natural tendency to its own reward, or in other words, that this firm truſt and confidence in the great diſpoſer of all things, contributes very much to the getting clear of any affliction, or to the bearing it manfully. A perſon who believes he has his ſuccour at hand, and that he acts in ſight of his friend, often exerts himſelf beyond his abilities, and does wonders that are not to be matched by one who is not animated with ſuch a confidence of ſucceſs. I could produce inſtances from hiſtory, of Generals, who out of a belief that they were under the protection of ſome inviſible aſſiſtant, did not only encourage their ſoldiers to do their utmoſt; but have acted themſelves beyond what they would have done, had they not been inſpired by ſuch a belief. I might, in the ſame manner, ſhew how ſuch a truſt in the aſſiſtance of an Almighty Being, naturally produces patience, hope, chearfulneſs, and all other diſpoſitions of mind that alleviate thoſe calamities which we are not able to remove.

The practice of this virtue adminiſters great comfort to the mind of man in times of poverty and affliction, but moſt of all in the hour of death. When the ſoul is hovering in the laſt moments of its ſeparation, when it is juſt entering on another ſtate of exiſtence, to converſe with ſcenes, and objects, and companions that are altogether new, what can ſupport her under ſuch tremblings of thought, ſuch fear, ſuch anxiety, ſuch apprehenſions, but the caſting of all her cares upon him who firſt gave her being, who has conducted her through one ſtage of it, and will be always with her to guide and comfort her in her progreſs through eternity?

David

David has very beautifully repreſented this ſteddy reliance on God Almighty in his twenty third pſalm, which is a kind of paſtoral hymn, and filled with thoſe alluſions which are uſual in that kind of writing. As the poetry is very exquiſite, I ſhall preſent my reader with the following tranſlation of it.

I.

The Lord my paſture ſhall prepare,
And feed me with a ſhepherd's care:
His preſence ſhall my wants ſupply,
And guard me with a watchful eye:
My noon-day-walks he ſhall attend,
And all my midnight hours defend.

II.

When in the ſultry glebe I faint,
Or on the thirſty mountain pant;
To fertile vales, and dewy meads
My weary wand'ring ſteps he leads;
Where peaceful rivers, ſoft and ſlow,
Amid the verdant landſkip flow.

III.

Tho' in the paths of death I tread,
With gloomy horrors overſpread,
My ſteadfaſt heart ſhall fear no ill,
For thou, O Lord! art with me ſtill;
Thy friendly crook ſhall give me aid,
And guide me through the dreadful ſhade.

IV.

Tho' in a bare and rugged way,
Through devious lonely wilds I ſtray,
Thy bounty ſhall my pains beguile:
The barren wilderneſs ſhall ſmile,
With ſudden greens and herbage crown'd,
And ſtreams ſhall murmur all around.

SECTION IV.

The WORSHIP *of GOD.*

Religentem eſſe oportet, religioſum nefas.

Incerti autoris apud Aul. Gell.

A man ſhould be religious, not ſuperſtitious.

IT is of the laſt importance to ſeaſon the paſſions of a child with devotion, which ſeldom dies in a mind that has received an early tincture of it. Though it may ſeem extinguiſhed for a while by the cares of the world, the heats of youth, or the allurements of vice, it generally breaks out and diſcovers itſelf again as ſoon as diſcretion, conſideration, age, or misfortunes have brought the man to himſelf. The fire may be covered and overlaid, but cannot be entirely quenched and ſmothered.

A ſtate of temperance, ſobriety, and juſtice, without devotion, is a cold, lifeleſs, inſipid condition of virtue; and is rather to be ſtyled philoſophy than religion. Devotion opens the mind to great conceptions, and fills it with more ſublime ideas than any that are to be met with in the moſt exalted ſcience; and, at the ſame time, warms and agitates the ſoul more than ſenſual pleaſure.

It has been obſerved by ſome writers, that man is more diſtinguiſhed from the animal world by devotion than by reaſon, as ſeveral brute creatures diſcover in their actions ſomething like a faint glimmering of reaſon, though they betray, in no ſingle circumſtance of their behaviour, any thing that bears the leaſt affinity to devotion. It is certain, the propenſity of the mind to religious worſhip, the natural tendency of the ſoul to fly to ſome ſuperior Being for ſuccour in dangers and diſtreſſes, the gratitude to an inviſible ſuperintendent which a-

riſes

riſes in us upon receiving any extraordinary and unexpected good fortune, the acts of love and admiration, with which the thoughts of men are ſo wonderfully tranſported in meditating upon the divine perfections, and the univerſal concurrence of all the nations under heaven in the great article of adoration, plainly ſhew that devotion or religious worſhip muſt be the effect of a tradition from ſome firſt founder of mankind, or that it is conformable to the natural light of reaſon, or that it proceeds from an inſtinct implanted in the ſoul itſelf. For my part, I look upon all theſe to be the concurrent cauſes, but which ever of them ſhall be aſſigned as the principle of divine worſhip, it manifeſtly points to a ſupreme Being as the firſt author of it.

I may take ſome other opportunity of conſidering thoſe particular forms and methods of devotion which are taught us by Chriſtianity; but ſhall here obſerve into what errors even this divine principle may ſometimes lead us, when it is not moderated by that right reaſon which was given us as the guide of all our actions.

The two great errors into which a miſtaken devotion may betray us, are enthuſiaſm and ſuperſtition.

There is not a more melancholy object than a man who has his head turned with religious enthuſiaſm. A perſon that is crazed, though with pride or malice, is a ſight very mortifying to human nature; but when the diſtemper ariſes from any indiſcreet fervors of devotion, or too intenſe an application of the mind to its miſtaken duties, it deſerves our compaſſion in a more particular manner. We may however learn this leſſon from it, that ſince devotion itſelf (which one would be apt to think could not be too warm) may diſorder the mind,

mind, unleſs its heats are tempered with caution and prudence, we ſhould be particularly careful to keep our reaſon as cool as poſſible, and to guard ourſelves in all parts of life againſt the influence of paſſion, imagination, and conſtitution.

Devotion, when it does not ly under the check of reaſon, is very apt to degenerate into enthuſiaſm. When the mind finds herſelf very much inflamed with her devotions, ſhe is too much inclined to think they are not of her own kindling, but blown up with ſomething divine within her. If ſhe indulges this thought too far, and humours the growing paſſion, ſhe at laſt flings herſelf into imaginary raptures and extaſies; and when once ſhe fancies herſelf under the influence of a divine impulſe, it is no wonder if ſhe ſlights human ordinances, and refuſes to comply with any eſtabliſhed form of religion, as thinking herſelf directed by a much ſuperior guide.

As enthuſiaſm is a kind of exceſs in devotion, ſuperſtition is the exceſs not only of devotion, but of religion in general; according to an old Heathen ſaying, quoted by Aulus Gellius, *religentem eſſe oportet, religioſum nefas*; A man ſhould be religious, not ſuperſtitious; for, as the author tells us, Nigidius obſerved upon this paſſage, that the Latin words which terminate in *oſus* generally imply vitious characters, and the having of any quality to an exceſs.

An enthuſiaſt in religion is like an obſtinate clown, a ſuperſtitious man like an inſipid courtier. Enthuſiaſm has ſomething in it of madneſs, ſuperſtition of folly. Moſt of the ſects that fall ſhort of the church of England, have in them ſtrong tinctures of enthuſiaſm, as the Roman Catholic religion is one huge over-grown body of childiſh and idle ſuperſtitions.

The

The Roman Catholic church ſeems indeed irrecoverably loſt in this particular. If an abſurd dreſs or behaviour be introduced in the world, it will ſoon be found out and diſcarded: on the contrary, a habit or ceremony, though never ſo ridiculous, which has taken ſanctuary in the church, ſticks in it for ever. A Gothic Biſhop, perhaps, thought it proper to repeat ſuch a form in ſuch particular ſhoes or ſlippers; another fancied it would be very decent if ſuch a part of public devotions were performed with a mitre on his head, and a croſier in his hand: to this a brother Vandal, as wiſe as the others, adds an antic dreſs, which, he conceived, would allude very aptly to ſuch and ſuch myſteries, 'till by degrees the whole office has degenerated into an empty ſhow.

Their ſucceſſors ſee the vanity and inconvenience of theſe ceremonies; but, inſtead of reforming, perhaps add others, which they think more ſignificant, and which take poſſeſſion in the ſame manner, and are never to be driven out after they have been once admitted. I have ſeen the Pope officiate at St. Peter's, where, for two hours together, he was buſied in putting on or off his different accoutrements, according to the different parts he was to act in them.

Nothing is ſo glorious in the eyes of mankind, and ornamental to human nature, ſetting aſide the infinite advantages which ariſe from it, as a ſtrong ſteddy maſculine piety; but enthuſiaſm and ſuperſtition are the weakneſſes of human reaſon, that expoſe us to the ſcorn and deriſion of Infidels, and ſink us even below the beaſts that periſh.

Idolatry may be looked upon as another error ariſing from miſtaken devotion; but, becauſe reflexions on that ſubject would be of no uſe to an Engliſh reader, I ſhall not enlarge upon it. L

Omnibus

Omnibus in terris, quae ſunt a Gadibus uſque
Auroram et Gangen, pauci dignoſcere poſſunt,
Vera bona, atque illis multum diverſa, remota
Erroris nebula———— Juv. Sat. 10. l. 1.

Look round the habitable world, how few
Know their own good, or knowing it, purſue. DRYDEN.

IN my laſt Saturday's paper I laid down ſome thoughts upon devotion in general, and ſhall here ſhew what were the notions of the moſt refined Heathens on this ſubject, as they are repreſented in Plato's dialogue upon prayer, intitled, *Alcibiades the ſecond*, which doubtleſs gave occaſion to Juvenal's tenth ſatire, and to the ſecond ſatire of Perſius; as the laſt of theſe authors has almoſt tranſcribed the preceeding dialogue, intitled, *Alcibiades the firſt*, in his fourth ſatire.

The ſpeakers in this dialogue upon prayer, are Socrates and Alcibiades; and the ſubſtance of it (when drawn together out of the intricacies and digreſſions) as follows.

Socrates meeting his pupil Alcibiades, as he was going to his devotions, and obſerving his eyes to be fixed upon the earth with great ſerioufneſs and attention, tells him, that he had reaſon to be thoughtful on that occaſion, ſince it was poſſible for a man to bring down evils upon himſelf, by his own prayers, and that thoſe things which the gods ſend him in anſwer to his petitions might turn to his deſtruction; this, ſays he, may not only happen when a man prays for what he knows is miſchievous in its own nature, as Oedipus implored the gods to ſow diſſenſion between his ſons, but when he prays for what he believes would be for his good, and againſt what he believes would be to his detriment. This the philoſopher ſhews muſt neceſſarily happen among us, ſince moſt men are blinded

blinded with ignorance, prejudice, or paſſion, which hinder them from ſeeing ſuch things as are really beneficial to them. For an inſtance, he aſks Alcibiades, whether he would not be throughly pleaſed and ſatisfied if that God to whom he was going to addreſs himſelf, ſhould promiſe to make him the ſovereign of the whole earth? Alcibiades anſwers, that he ſhould doubtleſs look upon ſuch a promiſe as the greateſt favour that could be beſtowed upon him. Socrates then aſks him, if after receiving this great favour he would be contented to loſe his life? or if he would receive it though he was ſure he ſhould make an ill uſe of it? To both which queſtions Alcibiades anſwers in the negative. Socrates then ſhews him, from the examples of others, how theſe might probably be the effects of ſuch a bleſſing. He then adds, that other reputed pieces of good fortune, as that of having a ſon, or procuring the higheſt poſt in a government, are ſubject to the like fatal conſequences; which nevertheleſs, ſays he, men ardently deſire, and would not fail to pray for, if they thought their prayers might be effectual for the obtaining of them.

Having eſtabliſhed this great point, that all the moſt apparent bleſſings in this life are obnoxious to ſuch dreadful conſequences, and that no man knows what in its events would prove to him a bleſſing or a curſe, he teaches Alcibiades after what manner he ought to pray.

In the firſt place, he recommends to him, as the model of his devotions, a ſhort prayer, which a Greek poet compoſed for the uſe of his friends, in the following words; "O Jupiter! give us thoſe "things which are good for us; whether they "are ſuch things as we pray for, or ſuch things "as we do not pray for; and remove from us "thoſe

" thoſe things which are hurtful, though they are " ſuch things as we pray for."

In the ſecond place, that his diſciple may aſk ſuch things as are expedient for him, he ſhews him, that it is abſolutely neceſſary to apply himſelf to the ſtudy of true wiſdom, and to the knowledge of that which is his chief good, and the moſt ſuitable to the excellency of his nature.

In the third and laſt place, he informs him, that the beſt methods he could make uſe of to draw down bleſſings upon himſelf, and to render his prayers acceptable, would be to live in a conſtant practice of his duty towards the gods, and towards men. Under this head he very much recommends a form of prayer the Lacedemonians made uſe of, in which they petition the gods, " to give them all good things, ſo long as they " were virtuous." Under this head likewiſe he gives a very remarkable account of an oracle to the following purpoſe.

When the Athenians, in the war with the Lacedemonians, received many defeats both by ſea and land, they ſent a meſſage to the oracle of Jupiter Ammon, to aſk the reaſon why they who erected ſo many temples to the gods, and adorned them with ſuch coſtly offerings; why they who had inſtituted ſo many feſtivals, and accompanied them with ſuch pomps and ceremonies; in ſhort, why they who had ſlain ſo many hecatombs at their altars, ſhould be leſs ſucceſsful than the Lacedemonians, who fell ſo ſhort of them in all theſe particulars. To this, ſays he, the oracle made the following reply; " I am better pleaſed with the " prayer of the Lacedemonians than with all the " oblations of the Greeks." As this prayer implied and encouraged virtue in thoſe who made it; the

the philoſopher proceeds to ſhew how the moſt vicious man might be devout, ſo far as victims could make him, but that his offerings were regarded by the gods as bribes, and his petitions as blaſphemies. He likewiſe quotes on this occaſion two verſes out of Homer, in which the poet ſays, that the ſcent of the Trojan ſacrifices was carried up to heaven by the winds; but that it was not acceptable to the gods, who were diſpleaſed with Priam and all his people.

The concluſion of this dialogue is very remarkable. Socrates having deterred Alcibiades from the prayers and ſacrifice he was going to offer, by ſetting forth the above mentioned difficulties of performing that duty as he ought, adds theſe words, "We muſt therefore wait till ſuch time as "we may learn how we ought to behave ourſelves "towards the gods and towards men." But when will that time come, ſays Alcibiades, and who is it will inſtruct us? For I would fain ſee this man, whoever he is. It is one, ſays Socrates, who takes care of you; but as Homer tells us, that Minerva removed the miſt from Diomedes his eyes, that he might plainly diſcover both gods and men; ſo the darkneſs that hangs upon your mind muſt be removed, before you are able to diſcern what is good and what is evil. Let him remove from my mind, ſays Alcibiades, the darkneſs, and what elſe he pleaſes; I am determined to refuſe nothing he ſhall order me, whoever he is, ſo that I may become the better man by it. The remaining part of this dialogue is very obſcure: there is ſomething in it that would make us think Socrates hinted at himſelf, when he ſpoke of this Divine Teacher who was to come into the world? did he not own, that he himſelf was in this reſpect as much at a loſs, and in as great diſtreſs as the reſt of mankind.

Some learned men look upon this concluſion as a prediction of our Saviour, or at leaſt that Socrates, like the High-prieſt, propheſied unknowingly, and pointed at that Divine Teacher who was to come into the world ſome ages after him. However that may be, we find that this great philoſopher ſaw, by the light of reaſon, that it was ſuitable to the goodneſs of the Divine Nature, to ſend a perſon into the world who ſhould inſtruct mankind in the duties of religion, and, in particular, teach them how to pray.

Whoever reads this abſtract of Plato's diſcourſe on prayer, will, I believe, naturally make this reflexion, that the great Founder of our religion, as well by his own example, as in the form of prayer which he taught his diſciples, did not only keep up to thoſe rules which the light of nature had ſuggeſted to this great philoſopher, but inſtructed his diſciples in the whole extent of this duty, as well as of all others. He directed them to the proper object of adoration, and taught them, according to the third rule above mentioned, to apply themſelves to him in their cloſets, without ſhow or oſtentation; and to worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth. As the Lacedemonians in their form of prayer implored the gods in general, to give them all good things ſo long as they were virtuous, we aſk in particular, "that our offences "may be forgiven as we forgive thoſe of others." If we look into the ſecond rule which Socrates has preſcribed, namely, that we ſhould apply ourſelves to the knowledge of ſuch things as are beſt for us, this too is explained at large in the doctrines of the Goſpel, where we are taught in ſeveral inſtances to regard thoſe things as curſes, which appear as bleſſings in the eye of the world; and, on the contrary, to eſteem thoſe things as bleſſings,

ſings, which to the generality of mankind appear as curſes. Thus, in the form which is preſcribed to us, we only pray for that happineſs which is our chief good, and the great end of our exiſtence, when we petition the ſupreme Being for "the coming of his kingdom," being ſolicitous for no other temporal bleſſing but our daily ſuſtenance. On the other ſide, we pray againſt nothing but ſin, and againſt evil in general, leaving it with Omniſcience to determine what is really ſuch. If we look into the firſt of Socrates his rules of prayer, in which he recommends the above mentioned form of the antient poet, we find that form not only comprehended, but very much improved in the petition, wherein we pray to the ſupreme Being that "his will may be done:" which is of the ſame force with that form which our Saviour uſed, when he prayed againſt the moſt painful and moſt ignominious of deaths, "nevertheleſs not my "will, but thine be done." This comprehenſive petition is the moſt humble, as well as the moſt prudent, that can be offered up from the creature to his Creator, as it ſuppoſes the ſupreme Being wills nothing but what is for our good, and that he knows better than ourſelves what is ſo. L

——*Nequeo monſtrare, et ſentio tantum.*

Juv. Sat. 7. l. 56.

'Tis what I only feel, but can't expreſs.

IF there were no other conſequence of it, but barely that human creatures on this day aſſemble themſelves before their Creator, without regard to their uſual employments, their minds at leiſure from the cares of this life, and their bodies adorned with the beſt attire they can beſtow on

them; I ſay, were this mere outward celebration of a Sabbath all that is expected from men, even that were a laudable diſtinction, and a purpoſe worthy the human nature. But when there is added to it the ſublime pleaſure of devotion, our being is exalted above itſelf; and he who ſpends a ſeventh day in the contemplation of the next life, will not eaſily fall into the corruptions of this in the other ſix. They who never admit thoughts of this kind into their imaginations, loſe higher and ſweeter ſatisfactions than can be raiſed by any other entertainment. The moſt illiterate man who is touched with devotion, and uſes frequent exerciſes of it, contracts a certain greatneſs of mind, mingled with a noble ſimplicity, that raiſes him above thoſe of the ſame condition; and there is an indelible mark of goodneſs in thoſe who ſincerely poſſeſs it. It is hardly poſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe; for the fervours of a pious mind will naturally contract ſuch an earneſtneſs and attention towards a better being, as will make the ordinary paſſages of life go off with a becoming indifference. By this a man in the loweſt condition will not appear mean, or in the moſt ſplendid fortune inſolent.

As to all the intricacies and viciſſitudes under which men are ordinarily entangled with the utmoſt ſorrow and paſſion, one who is devoted to heaven when he falls into ſuch difficulties, is led by a clue through a labyrinth. As to this world, he does not pretend to ſkill in the mazes of it, but fixes his thoughts upon one certainty, that he ſhall ſoon be out of it. And we may aſk very boldly, what can be a more ſure conſolation than to have an hope in death? When men are arrived at thinking of their very diſſolution with pleaſure, how few things are there that can be terrible to them? Certainly nothing can be dreadful to ſuch

ſpirits,

ſpirits, but what would make death terrible to them, falſhood towards man, or impiety towards heaven. To ſuch as theſe, as there are certainly many ſuch, the gratifications of innocent pleaſures are doubled, even with reflexions upon their imperfection. The diſappointments which naturally attend the great promiſes we make ourſelves in expected enjoyments, ſtrike no damp upon ſuch men, but only quicken their hopes of ſoon knowing joys, which are too pure to admit of allay or ſatiety.

It is thought among the politer ſort of mankind, an imperfection to want a reliſh of any of thoſe things which refine our lives. This is the foundation of the acceptance which eloquence, muſic and poetry make in the world; and I know not why devotion, conſidered merely as an exaltation of our happineſs, ſhould not at leaſt be ſo far regarded as to be conſidered. It is poſſible the very inquiry would lead men into ſuch thoughts and gratifications as they did not expect to meet with in this place. Many a good acquaintance has been loſt from a general prepoſſeſſion in his diſfavour, and a ſevere aſpect has often hid under it a very agreeable companion.

There are no diſtinguiſhing qualities among men to which there are not falſe pretenders; but though none is more pretended to than that of devotion, there are, perhaps, fewer ſucceſsful impoſtors in this kind than any other. There is ſomething ſo natively great and good in a perſon that is truly devout, that an aukward man may as well pretend to be genteel, as an hypocrite to be pious. The conſtraint in words and actions are equally viſible in both caſes, and any thing ſet up in their room does but remove the endeavours the farther off their pretenſions. But howe-

ver the ſenſe of true piety is abated, there is no other motive of action that can carry us through all the viciſſitudes of life with alacrity and reſolution. But piety, like philoſophy, when it is ſuperficial, does but make men appear the worſe for it; and a principle that is but half received, does but diſtract, inſtead of guiding our behaviour. When I reflect upon the unequal conduct of Lotius, I ſee many things that run directly counter to his intereſt; therefore I cannot attribute his labours for the public good to ambition. When I conſider his diſregard to his fortune, I cannot eſteem him covetous. How then can I reconcile his neglect of himſelf, and his zeal for others? I have long ſuſpected him to be a little pious: but no man ever hid his vice with greater caution than he does his virtue. It was the praiſe of a great Roman, that he had rather be, than appear, good. But ſuch is the weakneſs of Lotius, that I dare ſay, he had rather be eſteemed irreligious than devout. By, I know not, what impatience of raillery he is wonderfully fearful of being thought too great a believer. A hundred little devices are made uſe of to hide a time of private devotion; and he will allow you any ſuſpicion of his being ill employed, ſo you do not tax him with being well. But alas! how mean is ſuch a behaviour? To boaſt of virtue is a moſt ridiculous way of diſappointing the merit of it, but not ſo pitiful as that of being aſhamed of it. How unhappy is the wretch who makes the moſt abſolute and independent motive of action the cauſe of perplexity and inconſtancy? How much another figure does Cælicola make with all who know him? His great and ſuperior mind, frequently exalted by the raptures of heavenly meditation, is to all his friends of the ſame uſe as if an angel were to appear at the deciſion of their diſputes. They very well

well underſtand he is as much diſintereſted and unbiaſſed as ſuch a being. He conſiders all applications made to him, as thoſe addreſſes will affect his own application to heaven. All his determinations are delivered with a beautiful humility; and he pronounces his deciſions with the air of one who is more frequently a ſupplicant than a judge.

Thus humble, and thus great, is the man who is moved by piety, and exalted by devotion. But behold this recommended by the maſterly hand of a great divine I have heretofore made bold with.

"It is ſuch a pleaſure as can never cloy or o-
"verwork the mind; a delight that grows and
"improves under thought and reflexion; and,
"while it exerciſes, does alſo endear itſelf to the
"mind. All pleaſures that affect the body muſt
"needs weary, becauſe they tranſport; and all
"tranſportation is a violence; and no violence can
"be laſting, but determines upon the falling of
"the ſpirits, which are not able to keep up that
"height of motion that the pleaſure of the ſenſes
"raiſes them to. And therefore how inevitably
"does an immoderate laughter end in a ſigh,
"which is only nature's recovering itſelf after a
"force done to it: but the religious pleaſure of a
"well-diſpoſed mind moves gently, and therefore
"conſtantly. It does not affect by rapture and ex-
"taſy, but is like the pleaſure of health, greater
"and ſtronger than thoſe that call up the ſenſes
"with groſſer and more affecting impreſſions. No
"man's body is as ſtrong as his appetites; but
"heaven has corrected the boundleſſneſs of his vo-
"luptuous deſires by ſtinting his ſtrengths, and
"contracting his capacities.—The pleaſure of the
"religious man is an eaſy and a portable pleaſure,
"ſuch an one as he carries about in his boſom,
"without alarming either the eye or the envy of
"the

" the world. A man putting all his pleaſures in-
" to this one, is like a traveller putting all his
" goods into one jewel; the value is the ſame,
" and the convenience greater."

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SECTION V.

Advantages of REVELATION *above Natural Reaſon.*

——*quicquid dignum ſapiente bonoque eſt.*
HOR. Lib. I. Ep. 4. l. 5.

——*What befits the wiſe and good.* CREECH.

RELIGION may be conſidered under two general heads. The firſt comprehends what we are to believe, the other what we are to practiſe. By thoſe things which we are to believe, I mean whatever is revealed to us in the holy writings, and which we could not have obtained the knowledge of by the light of nature; by the things which we are to practiſe, I mean all thoſe duties to which we are directed by reaſon or natural religion. The firſt of theſe I ſhall diſtinguiſh by the name of faith, the ſecond by that of morality.

If we look into the more ſerious part of mankind, we find many who lay ſo great a ſtreſs upon faith, that they neglect morality; and many who build ſo much upon morality, that they do not pay a due regard to faith. The perfect man ſhould be defective in neither of theſe particulars, as will be very evident to thoſe who conſider the benefits which ariſe from each of them, and which I ſhall make the ſubject of this day's paper.

Notwithſtanding this general diviſion of Chriſtian duty into morality and faith, and that they have both

both their peculiar excellencies, the firſt has the pre-eminence in ſeveral reſpects.

Firſt, Becauſe the greateſt part of morality (as I have ſtated the notion of it) is of a fixed eternal nature, and will endure when faith ſhall fail, and be loſt in conviction.

Secondly, Becauſe a perſon may be qualified to do greater good to mankind, and become more beneficial to the world, by morality, without faith, than by faith without morality.

Thirdly, Becauſe morality gives a greater perfection to human nature, by quieting the mind, moderating the paſſions, and advancing the happineſs of every man in his private capacity.

Fourthly, Becauſe the rule of morality is much more certain than that of faith; all the civilized nations in the world agreeing in the great points of morality, as much as they differ in thoſe of faith.

Fifthly, Becauſe infidelity is not of ſo malignant a nature as immorality; or, to put the ſame reaſon in another light, becauſe it is generally owned, there may be ſalvation for a virtuous Infidel (particularly in the caſe of invincible ignorance) but none for a vicious believer.

Sixthly, Becauſe faith ſeems to draw its principal, if not all its excellency, from the influence it has upon morality; as we ſhall ſee more at large, if we conſider wherein conſiſts the excellency of faith, or the belief of revealed religion; and this I think is,

Firſt, In explaining and carrying to greater heights, ſeveral points of morality.

Secondly, In furniſhing new and ſtronger motives to enforce the practice of morality.

Thirdly, In giving us more amiable ideas of the ſupreme Being, more endearing notions of one another,

other, and a truer ſtate of ourſelves both in regard to the grandeur and vileneſs of our natures.

Fourthly, By ſhewing us the blackneſs and deformity of vice, which, in the Chriſtian ſyſtem, is ſo very great, that he who is poſſeſſed of all perfection, and the ſovereign Judge of it, is repreſented by ſeveral of our divines as hating ſin to the ſame degree that he loves the ſacred perſon who was made the propitiation of it.

Fifthly, In being the ordinary and preſcribed method of making morality effectual to ſalvation.

I have only touched on theſe ſeveral heads, which every one, who is converſant in diſcourſes of this nature will eaſily enlarge upon in his own thoughts, and draw concluſions from them which may be uſeful to him in the conduct of his life. One I am ſure is ſo obvious, that he cannot miſs it, namely, that a man cannot be perfect in his ſcheme of morality, who does not ſtrengthen and ſupport it with that of the Chriſtian faith.

Beſides this, I ſhall lay down two or three other maxims which I think we may deduce from what has been ſaid.

Firſt, That we ſhould be particularly cautious of making any thing an article of faith, which does not contribute to the confirmation or improvement of morality.

Secondly, That no article of faith can be true and authentic, which weakens or ſubverts the practical part of religion, or what I have hitherto called morality.

Thirdly, That the greateſt friend of morality, or natural religion, cannot poſſibly apprehend any danger from embracing Chriſtianity, as it is preſerved pure and uncorrupt in the doctrines of our national church.

There

There is likewiſe another maxim which I think may be drawn from the foregoing conſiderations, which is this, that we ſhould, in all dubious points, conſider any ill conſequences that may ariſe from them, ſuppoſing they ſhould be erroneous, before we give up our aſſent to them.

For example, in that diſputable point of perſecuting men for conſcience ſake, beſides the imbittering their minds with hatred, indignation, and all the vehemence of reſentment, and enſnaring them to profeſs what they do not believe; we cut them off from the pleaſures and advantages of ſociety, afflict their bodies, diſtreſs their fortunes, hurt their reputations, ruin their families, make their lives painful, or put an end to them. Sure when I ſee ſuch dreadful conſequences riſing from a principle, I would be as fully convinced of the truth of it, as of a mathematical demonſtration, before I would venture to act upon it, or make it a part of my religion.

In this caſe the injury done our neighbour is plain and evident, the principle that puts us upon doing it, of a dubious and diſputable nature. Morality ſeems highly violated by the one, and whether or no a zeal for what a man thinks the true ſyſtem of faith may juſtify it, is very uncertain. I cannot but think, if our religion produce charity as well as zeal, it will not be for ſhewing itſelf by ſuch cruel inſtances. But, to conclude with the words of an excellent author, "we have juſt e-"nough religion to make us hate, but not enough "to make us love one another."

Ὁ ἐλαχίστων δεόμενος ἐγγυτάτω θεῶν. Socrates apud Xen.

The fewer things we want, the more we reſemble God.

IT was the common boaſt of the Heathen philoſophers, that by the efficacy of their ſeveral doctrines, they made human nature reſemble the divine. How much miſtaken ſoever they might be in the ſeveral means they propoſed for this end, it muſt be owned that the deſign was great and glorious. The fineſt works of invention and imagination, are of very little weight, when put in the balance with what refines and exalts the rational mind. Longinus excuſes Homer very handſomely, when he ſays, The poet made his gods like men, that he might make his men appear like the gods: but it muſt be allowed, that ſeveral of the antient philoſophers acted, as Cicero wiſhes Homer had done; they endeavoured rather to make men like gods, than gods like men.

According to this general maxim in philoſophy, ſome of them have endeavoured to place men in ſuch a ſtate of pleaſure, or indolence at leaſt, as they vainly imagined the happineſs of the ſupreme Being to conſiſt in. On the other hand, the moſt virtuous ſect of philoſophers have created a chimerical wiſe man, whom they made exempt from paſſion and pain, and thought it enough to pronounce him all-ſufficient.

This laſt character, when diveſted of the glare of human philoſophy that ſurrounds it, ſignifies no more, than that a good and wiſe man ſhould ſo arm himſelf with patience, as not to yield tamely to the violence of paſſion and pain; that he ſhould learn ſo to ſuppreſs and contract his deſires as to have few wants; and that he ſhould cheriſh ſo many virtues

virtues in his ſoul, as to have a perpetual ſource of pleaſure in himſelf.

The Chriſtian religion requires, that, after having framed the beſt idea, we are able, of the Divine Nature, it ſhould be our next care to conform ourſelves to it, as far as our imperfections will permit. I might mention ſeveral paſſages in the ſacred writings on this head, to which I might add many maxims and wiſe ſayings of moral authors among the Greeks and Romans.

I ſhall only inſtance a remarkable paſſage, to this purpoſe, out of Julian's Cæſars. The Emperor having repreſented all the Roman Emperors, with Alexander the Great, as paſſing in review before the gods, and ſtriving for the ſuperiority, lets them all drop, excepting Alexander, Julius Cæſar, Auguſtus Cæſar, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, and Conſtantine. Each of theſe great heroes of antiquity lays in his claim for the upper place; and, in order to it, ſets forth his actions after the moſt advantageous manner. But the gods, inſtead of being dazled with the luſtre of their actions, inquire, by Mercury, into the proper motive and governing principle that influenced them throughout the whole ſeries of their lives and exploits. Alexander tells them, that his aim was to conquer; Julius Cæſar, that his was to gain the higheſt poſt in his country; Auguſtus, to govern well; Trajan, that his was the ſame as that of Alexander, namely, to conquer. The queſtion, at length, was put to Marcus Aurelius, who replied with great modeſty, that it had always been his care to imitate the gods. This conduct ſeems to have gained him the moſt votes and beſt place in the whole aſſembly. Marcus Aurelius being afterwards aſked to explain himſelf, declares, that, by imitating the gods, he endeavoured to imitate them in the uſe of his underſtanding,

and of all other faculties; and in particular, that it was always his ſtudy to have as few wants as poſſible in himſelf, and to do all the good he could to others.

Among the many methods by which revealed religion has advanced morality, this is one, That it has given us a more juſt and perfect idea of that being whom every reaſonable creature ought to imitate. The young man, in a Heathen comedy, might juſtify his lewdneſs by the example of Jupiter; as, indeed, there was ſcarce any crime that might not be countenanced by thoſe notions of the Deity which prevailed among the common people in the Heathen world. Revealed religion ſets forth a proper object for imitation, in that Being who is the pattern, as well as the ſource of all ſpiritual perfection.

While we remain in this life, we are ſubject to innumerable temptations, which, if liſtened to, will make us deviate from reaſon and goodneſs, the only things wherein we can imitate the ſupreme Being. In the next life we meet with nothing to excite our inclinations that doth not deſerve them. I ſhall therefore diſmiſs my reader with this maxim, *viz.* "Our happineſs in this world proceeds from "the ſuppreſſion of our deſires, but in the next "world from the gratification of them."

———quis enim virtutem amplectitur ipſam,
Præmia ſi tollas? Juv. Sat. x. l. 141.

For who would virtue, for herſelf, regard,
Or wed, without the portion of reward? DRYDEN.

IT is uſual with polemical writers to object ill deſigns to their adverſaries. This turns their argument into ſatire, which, inſtead of ſhewing an error in the underſtanding, tends only to expoſe the morals

morals of thoſe they write againſt. I ſhall not act after this manner with reſpect to the free-thinkers. Virtue, and the happineſs of ſociety, are the great ends which all men ought to promote, and ſome of that ſect would be thought to have at heart above the reſt of mankind. But ſuppoſing thoſe who make that profeſſion to carry on a good deſign in the ſimplicity of their hearts, and according to their beſt knowledge, yet it is much to be feared, thoſe well-meaning ſouls, while they endeavoured to recommend virtue, have in reality been advancing the intereſts of vice, which, as I take to proceed from their ignorance of human nature, we may hope, when they become ſenſible of their miſtake, they will, in conſequence of that beneficent principle they pretend to act upon, reform their practice for the future.

The ſages, whom I have in my eye, ſpeak of virtue as the moſt amiable thing in the world; but at the ſame time that they extol her beauty, they take care to leſſen her portion. Such innocent creatures are they, and ſo great ſtrangers to the world, that they think this a likely method to increaſe the number of her admirers.

Virtue has in herſelf the moſt engaging charms; and Chriſtianity, as it places her in the ſtrongeſt light, and adorned with all her native attractions, ſo it kindles a new fire in the ſoul, by adding to them the unutterable rewards which attend her votaries in an eternal ſtate. Or if there are men of a Saturnine and heavy complexion, who are not eaſily lifted up by hope, there is the proſpect of everlaſting puniſhment to agitate their ſouls, and frighten them into the practice of virtue, and an averſion from vice.

Whereas your ſober free-thinkers tell you, that virtue indeed is beautiful, and vice deformed: the

former deſerves your love, and the latter your abhorrence; but then, it is for their own ſake, or on account of the good and evil which immediately attend them, and are inſeparable from their reſpective natures. As for the immortality of the ſoul, or eternal puniſhments and rewards, thoſe are openly ridiculed, or rendered ſuſpicious by the moſt ſly and laboured artifice.

I will not ſay theſe men act treacherouſly in the cauſe of virtue; but will any one deny, that they act fooliſhly, who pretend to advance the intereſt of it by deſtroying or weakening the ſtrongeſt motives to it, which are accommodated to all capacities, and fitted to work on all diſpoſitions, and enforcing thoſe alone which can affect only a generous and exalted mind?

Surely they muſt be deſtitute of paſſion themſelves, and unacquainted with the force it hath on the minds of others, who can imagine that the mere beauty of fortitude, temperance and juſtice, is ſufficient to ſuſtain the mind of man in a ſevere courſe of ſelf-denial againſt all the temptations of preſent profit and ſenſuality.

It is my opinion the free-thinkers ſhould be treated as a ſet of poor ignorant creatures, that have not ſenſe to diſcover the excellency of religion; it being evident thoſe men are no witches, nor likely to be guilty of any deep deſign, who proclaim aloud to the world, that they have leſs motives of honeſty than the reſt of their fellow-ſubjects; who have all the inducements to the exerciſe of any virtue which a free-thinker can poſſibly have, and beſides, the expectation of never-ending happineſs or miſery as the conſequence of their choice.

Are not men actuated by their paſſions; and are not hope and fear the moſt powerful of our paſſi-

ons;

ons; and are there any objects which can rouſe and awaken our hopes and fears, like thoſe proſpects that warm and penetrate the heart of a Chriſtian, but are not regarded by a free-thinker.

It is not only a clear point, that a Chriſtian breaks through ſtronger engagements whenever he ſurrenders himſelf to commit a criminal action, and is ſtung with a ſharper remorſe after it than a free-thinker; but it ſhould even ſeem that a man who believes no future ſtate, would act a fooliſh part in being throughly honeſt. For what reaſon is there why ſuch a one ſhould poſtpone his own private intereſt or pleaſure to the doing his duty? If a Chriſtian foregoes ſome preſent advantage for the ſake of his conſcience, he acts accountably, becauſe it is with the view of gaining ſome greater future good. But he that, having no ſuch view, ſhould yet conſcientiouſly deny himſelf a preſent good in any incident where he may ſave appearances, is altogether as ſtupid as he that would truſt him at ſuch a juncture.

It will, perhaps, be ſaid, That virtue is her own reward, that a natural gratification attends good actions, which is alone ſufficient to excite men to the performance of them. But although there is nothing more lovely than virtue, and the practice of it is the ſureſt way to ſolid natural happineſs, even in this life; yet titles, eſtates, and fantaſtical pleaſures, are more ardently ſought after by moſt men, than the natural gratifications of a reaſonable mind; and it cannot be denied, that virtue and innocence are not always the readieſt methods to attain that ſort of happineſs. Beſides, the fumes of paſſion muſt be allayed, and reaſon muſt burn brighter than ordinary, to enable men to ſee and reliſh all the native beauties and delights of a virtuous life. And though we ſhould grant

our free-thinkers to be a ſet of refined ſpirits, capable only of being enamoured of virtue, yet what would become of the bulk of mankind who have groſs underſtandings, but lively ſenſes and ſtrong paſſions? What a deluge of luſt, and fraud, and violence would in a little time overflow the whole nation, if theſe wiſe advocates for morality were univerſally hearkened to? Laſtly, opportunities do ſometimes offer in which a man may wickedly make his fortune, or indulge a pleaſure, without fear of temporal damage, either in reputation, health, or fortune. In ſuch caſes what reſtraint do they ly under who have no regards beyond the grave? the inward compunctions of a wicked, as well as the joys of an upright mind, being grafted on the ſenſe of another ſtate.

The thought, that our exiſtence terminates with this life, doth naturally check the ſoul in any generous purſuit, contract her views, and fix them on temporary and ſelfiſh ends. It dethrones the reaſon, extinguiſhes all noble and heroic ſentiments, and ſubjects the mind to the ſlavery of every preſent paſſion. The wiſe Heathens of antiquity were not ignorant of this; hence they endeavoured by fables and conjectures, and the glimmerings of nature, to poſſeſs the minds of men with the belief of a future ſtate, which has been ſince brought to light by the Goſpel, and is now moſt inconſiſtently decried by a few weak men, who would have us believe that they promote virtue by turning religion into ridicule.

Men

Mens agitat molem——— Virg. Aen. vi. l. 727.
God actuates this univerſal frame.

TO one who regards things with a philoſophical eye, and hath a ſoul capable of being delighted with the ſenſe that truth and knowledge prevail among men, it muſt be a grateful reflexion to think that the ſublimeſt truths, which among the Heathens only here and there one of brighter parts and more leiſure than ordinary could attain to, are now grown familiar to the meaneſt inhabitants of theſe nations.

Whence came this ſurprizing change, that regions formerly inhabited by ignorant and ſavage people ſhould now outſhine antient Greece, and the other Eaſtern countries, ſo renowned of old, in the moſt elevated notions of theology and morality? Is it the effect of our own parts and induſtry? Have our common mechanics more refined underſtandings than the antient philoſophers? It is owing to the God of truth, who came down from heaven, and condeſcended to be himſelf our teacher. It is as we are Chriſtians, that we profeſs more excellent and divine truths than the reſt of mankind.

If there be any of the free-thinkers who are not direct atheiſts, charity would incline one to believe them ignorant of what is here advanced. And it is for their information that I write this paper, the deſign of which is to compare the ideas that Chriſtians entertain of the being and attributes of a God, with the groſs notions of the Heathen world. Is it poſſible for the mind of man to conceive a more auguſt idea of the Deity than is ſet forth in the holy Scriptures? I ſhall throw together ſome paſſages relating to this ſubject, which

which I propoſe only as philoſophical ſentiments, to be conſidered by a free-thinker.

" Though there be that are called gods, yet to " us there is but one God. He made the hea- " ven, and heaven of heavens, with all their hoſt; " the earth and all things that are therein; the " ſeas and all that is therein; he ſaid, let them " be, and it was ſo. He hath ſtretched forth the " heavens. He hath founded the earth, and " hung it upon nothing. He hath ſhut up the " ſea with doors, and ſaid, Hitherto ſhalt thou " come and no further, and here ſhall thy proud " waves be ſtaid. The Lord is an inviſible ſpi- " rit, in whom we live, and move, and have " our being. He is the fountain of life. He " preſerveth man and beaſt. He giveth food to " all fleſh. In his hand is the ſoul of every li- " ving thing, and the breath of all mankind. " The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich. He " bringeth low and lifteth up. He killeth and " maketh alive. He woundeth and healeth. " By him kings reign, and princes decree ju- " ſtice, and not a ſparrow falleth to the ground " without him. All angels, authorities, and " powers are ſubject to him. He appointeth " the moon for ſeaſons, and the ſun knoweth " his going down. He thundereth with his " voice, and directeth it under the whole hea- " ven, and his lightening unto the ends of the " earth. Fire and hail, ſnow and vapour, wind " and ſtorm, fulfil his word. The Lord is King " for ever and ever, and his dominion is an e- " verlaſting dominion. The earth and the hea- " vens ſhall periſh, but thou, O Lord! remaineſt. " They all ſhall wax old, as doth a garment, and as " a veſture ſhalt thou fold them up, and they " ſhall be changed; but thou art the ſame, and

" thy

" thy years ſhall have no end. God is perfect
" in knowledge; his underſtanding is infinite.
" He is the Father of lights. He looketh to the
" ends of the earth, and ſeeth under the whole
" heaven. The Lord beholdeth all the child-
" ren of men from the place of his habitation,
" and conſidereth all their works. He knoweth
" our down-ſitting and up-riſing. He compaſ-
" ſeth our path, and counteth our ſteps. He is
" acquainted with all our ways; and when
" we enter our cloſet, and ſhut our door, he
" ſeeth us. He knoweth the things that come in-
" to our mind, every one of them: and no
" thought can be with-holden from him. The
" Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are
" over all his works. He is a Father of the father-
" leſs, and a judge of the widow. He is the
" God of peace, the Father of mercies, and the
" God of all comfort and conſolation. The
" Lord is great, and we know him not: his
" greatneſs is unſearchable. Who but he hath
" meaſured the waters in the hollow of his hand,
" and meted out the heavens with a ſpan? Thine,
" O Lord! is the greatneſs, and the power, and
" the glory, and the victory, and the majeſty.
" Thou art very great, thou art clothed with ho-
" nour. Heaven is thy throne, and earth is thy
" footſtool."

Can the mind of a philoſopher riſe to a more juſt and magnificent, and at the ſame time, a more amiable idea of the Deity, than is here ſet forth in the ſtrongeſt images and moſt emphatical language? and yet this is the language of ſhepherds and fiſhermen. The illiterate Jews and poor perſecuted Chriſtians retained theſe noble ſentiments, while the polite and powerful nations of the earth were given up to that ſot-

tiſh

tiſh ſort of worſhip of which the following elegant deſcription is extracted from one of the inſpired writers.

"Who hath formed a god, or molten an image "that is profitable for nothing? The ſmith with "the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fa- "ſhioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with "the ſtrength of his arms: yea he is hungry and "his ſtrength faileth. He drinketh no water and "is faint. A man planteth an aſh, and the rain "doth nouriſh it. He burneth part thereof in the "fire. He roaſteth roaſt. He warmeth himſelf. "And the reſidue thereof he maketh a god. He "falleth down unto it, and worſhippeth it, and "prayeth unto it, and ſaith, Deliver me; for "thou art my god. None conſidereth in his "heart, I have burnt part of it in the fire, yea al- "ſo, I have baked bread upon the coals thereof: "I have roaſted fleſh and eaten it; and ſhall I "make the reſidue thereof an abomination? ſhall "I fall down to the ſtock of a tree?"

In ſuch circumſtances as theſe, for a man to declare for free-thinking, and diſengage himſelf from the yoke of idolatry, were doing honour to human nature, and a work well becoming the great aſſerters of reaſon. But in a church, where our adoration is directed to the ſupreme Being, and (to ſay the leaſt) where is nothing either in the object or manner of worſhip that contradicts the light of nature, there, under the pretence of free-thinking, to rail at the religious inſtitutions of their country, ſheweth an undiſtinguiſhing genius that miſtakes oppoſition for freedom of thought. And, indeed, notwithſtanding the pretences of ſome few among our free-thinkers, I can hardly think there are men ſo ſtupid and inconſiſtent with themſelves, as to have a ſerious regard for natural religion, and

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at the ſame time uſe their utmoſt endeavours to deſtroy the credit of thoſe ſacred writings, which as they have been the means of bringing theſe parts of the world to the knowledge of natural religion, ſo in caſe they loſe their authority over the minds of men, we ſhould of courſe ſink into the ſame idolatry which we ſee practiſed by other unenlightened nations.

If a perſon who exerts himſelf in the modern way of free-thinking, be not a ſtupid idolater, it is undeniable, that he contributes all he can to the making other men ſo, either by ignorance or deſign; which lays him under the dilemma, I will not ſay of being a fool or knave, but of incurring the contempt or deteſtation of mankind.

SECTION VI.

Excellency of the CHRISTIAN *Inſtitution.*

——Aptiſſima quaeque dabunt dii,
Charior eſt illis homo, quam ſibi—— Juv. Sat. x. l. 349.

——The gods will grant
What their unerring wiſdom ſees thee want:
In goodneſs, as in greatneſs, they excel;
Ah that we lov'd ourſelves but half ſo well! DRYDEN.

IT is owing to pride, and a ſecret affectation of a certain ſelf-exiſtence, that the nobleſt motive for action that ever was propoſed to man, is not acknowledged the glory and happineſs of their being. The heart is treacherous to itſelf, and we do not let our reflexions go deep enough to receive religion as the moſt honourable incentive to good and worthy actions. It is our natural weakneſs, to flatter ourſelves into a belief, that if we ſearch into our inmoſt thoughts, we find ourſelves wholly diſintereſted,

diſintereſted, and diveſted of any views ariſing from ſelf-love and vain-glory. But however ſpirits of ſuperficial greatneſs may diſdain at firſt ſight to do any thing, but from a noble impulſe in themſelves, without any future regards in this or another being; upon ſtricter inquiry they will find, to act worthily and expect to be rewarded only in another world, is as heroic a pitch of virtue as human nature can arrive at. If the tenor of our actions have any other motive, than the deſire to be pleaſing in the eye of the Deity, it will neceſſarily follow that we muſt be more than men, if we are not too much exalted in proſperity, and depreſſed in adverſity: but the Chriſtian world has a leader, the contemplation of whoſe life and ſufferings muſt adminiſter comfort in affliction, while the ſenſe of his power and omnipotence muſt give them humiliation in proſperity.

It is owing to the forbidden and unlovely conſtraint with which men of low conceptions act when they think they conform themſelves to religion, as well as to the more odious conduct of hypocrites, that the word Chriſtian does not carry with it, at firſt view, all that is great, worthy, friendly, generous, and heroic. The man who ſuſpends his hopes of the reward of worthy actions till after death, who can beſtow unſeen, who can overlook hatred, do good to his ſlanderer, who can never be angry at his friend, never revengeful to his enemy, is certainly formed for the benefit of ſociety: yet theſe are ſo far from heroic virtues, that they are but the ordinary duties of a Chriſtian.

When a man, with a ſteddy faith, looks back on the great cataſtrophe of this day, with what bleeding emotions of heart muſt he contemplate the life and ſufferings of his Deliverer? When his agonies

agonies occur to him, how will we weep to reflect that he has often forgot them for the glance of a wanton, for the applauſe of a vain world, for an heap of fleeting paſt pleaſures, which are at preſent aking ſorrows?

How pleaſing is the contemplation of the lowly ſteps our Almighty Leader took in conducting us to his heavenly manſions? In plain and apt parable, ſimilitude, and allegory, our great Maſter enforced the doctrine of our ſalvation; but they of his acquaintance, inſtead of receiving what they could not oppoſe, were offended at the preſumption of being wiſer than they: they could not raiſe their little ideas above the conſideration of him, in thoſe circumſtances familiar to them, or conceive that he who appeared not more terrible or pompous, ſhould have any thing more exalted than themſelves; he in that place therefore would not longer ineffectually exert a power which was incapable of conquering the prepoſſeſſion of their narrow and mean conceptions.

Multitudes followed him, and brought him the dumb, the blind, the ſick, and maimed; whom, when their Creator had touched, with a ſecond life they ſaw, ſpoke, leaped, and ran. In affection to him, and admiration of his actions, the crowd could not leave him, but waited near him 'till they were almoſt as faint and helpleſs as others they brought for ſuccour. He had compaſſion on them, and by a miracle ſupplied their neceſſities. Oh! the ecſtatic entertainment, when they could behold their food immediately increaſe to the diſtributer's hand, and ſee their God in perſon feeding and refreſhing his creatures! Oh envied happineſs! But why do I ſay envied? as if our God did not ſtill preſide over our temperate meals, chearful hours, and innocent converſations.

But though the ſacred ſtory is every where full of miracles not inferior to this, and though in the midſt of thoſe acts of divinity he never gave the leaſt hint of a deſign to become a ſecular Prince, yet had not hitherto the apoſtles themſelves any other hopes than of worldly power, preferment, riches and pomp; for Peter, upon an accident of ambition among the apoſtles, hearing his Maſter explain that his kingdom was not of this world, was ſo ſcandalized, that he, whom he had ſo long followed, ſhould ſuffer the ignominy, ſhame, and death which he foretold, that he took him aſide and ſaid, "Be it far from thee, Lord! this ſhall "not be unto thee:" for which he ſuffered a ſevere reprehenſion from his Maſter, as having in his view the glory of man rather than that of God.

The great change of things began to draw near, when the Lord of nature thought fit as a Saviour and Deliverer to make his public entry into Jeruſalem with more than the power and joy, but none of the oſtentation and pomp of a triumph; he came humble, meek, and lowly: with an unfelt new extaſy, multitudes ſtrewed his way with garments and olive-branches, crying with loud gladneſs and acclamation, "Hoſannah to the ſon of David, "bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" At this great King's acceſſion to his throne, men were not ennobled, but ſaved; crimes were not remitted, but ſins forgiven; he did not beſtow medals, honours, favours, but health, joy, ſight, ſpeech. The firſt object the blind ever ſaw, was the author of ſight; while the lame ran before, and the dumb repeated the Hoſannah. Thus attended, he entered into his own houſe, the ſacred temple, and, by his divine authority, expelled traders and worldlings that profaned it; and thus

thus did he, for a time, uſe a great and deſpotic power, to let unbelievers underſtand, that it was not want of, but ſuperiority to, all worldly dominion, that made him not exert it. But is this then the Saviour? is this the Deliverer? ſhall this obſcure Nazarene command Iſrael, and ſit on the throne of David? Their proud and diſdainful hearts, which were petrified with the love and pride of this world, were impregnable to the reception of ſo mean a benefactor, and were now enough exaſperated with benefits to conſpire his death. Our Lord was ſenſible of their deſign, and prepared his diſciples for it, by recounting to them now more diſtinctly what ſhould befal him; but Peter, with an ungrounded reſolution, and in a fluſh of temper, made a ſanguine proteſtation, that though all men were offended in him, yet would not he be offended. It was a great article of our Saviour's buſineſs in the world, to bring us to a ſenſe of our inability, without God's aſſiſtance, to do any thing great or good; he therefore told Peter, who thought ſo well of his courage and fidelity, that they would both fail him, and even he ſhould deny him thrice that very night.

"But what heart can conceive, what tongue utter "the ſequel? Who is that yonder buffeted, mock- "ed and ſpurned? Whom do they drag like a "felon? Whether do they carry my Lord, my "King, my Saviour, and my God? And will he "die to expiate thoſe very injuries? See where "they have nailed the Lord and Giver of life! "how his wounds blacken, his body writhes, and "heart heaves with pity and with agony! Oh "Almighty Sufferer! look down, look down from "thy triumphant infamy: lo, he inclines his head "to his ſacred boſom! hark, he grones! ſee, he "expires! The earth trembles, the temple rends,

" the rocks burſt, the dead ariſe: which are the " quick? which are the dead? Sure nature, all " nature is departing with her Creator. T

IF to inform the underſtanding, and regulate the will, is the moſt laſting and diffuſive benefit, there will not be found ſo uſeful and excellent an inſtitution as that of the Chriſtian prieſthood, which is now become the ſcorn of fools. That a numerous order of men ſhould be conſecrated to the ſtudy of the moſt ſublime and beneficial truths, with a deſign to propagate them by their diſcourſes and writings, to inform their fellow-creatures of the being and attributes of the Deity, to poſſeſs their minds with the ſenſe of a future ſtate, and not only to explain the nature of every virtue and moral duty, but likewiſe to perſuade mankind to the practice of them by the moſt powerful and engaging motives, is a thing ſo excellent and neceſſary to the well-being of the world, that no body but a modern free-thinker could have the forehead or folly to turn it into ridicule.

The light in which theſe points ſhould be expoſed to the view of one who is prejudiced againſt the names, religion, church, prieſt, and the like, is, to conſider the clergy as ſo many philoſophers, the churches as ſchools, and their ſermons as lectures, for the information and improvement of the audience. How would the heart of Socrates or Tully have rejoiced, had they lived in a nation, where the law had made proviſion for philoſophers, to read lectures of morality and theology every ſeventh day, in ſeveral thouſands of ſchools erected at the public charge throughout the whole country, at which lectures all ranks and ſexes without diſtinction were obliged to be preſent for their general improve-

improvement? and what wicked wretches would they think thoſe men, who ſhould endeavour to defeat the purpoſe of ſo divine an inſtitution?

It is indeed uſual with that low tribe of writers, to pretend their deſign is only to reform the church, and expoſe the vices and not the order of the clergy. The author of a pamphlet printed the other day, (which, without my mentioning the title, will, on this occaſion, occur to the thoughts of thoſe who have read it) hopes to inſinuate by that artifice what he is afraid or aſhamed openly to maintain. But there are two points which clearly ſhew what it is he aims at. The firſt is, that he conſtantly uſes the word prieſt in ſuch a manner, as that his reader cannot but obſerve he means to throw an odium on the clergy of the church of England, from their being called by a name which they enjoy in common with Heathens and Impoſtors. The other is, his raking together and exaggerating, with great ſpleen and induſtry, all thoſe actions of church-men, which, either by their own illneſs, or the bad light in which he places them, tend to give men an ill impreſſion of the diſpenſers of the Goſpel: all which he pathetically addreſſes to the conſideration of his wiſe and honeſt countrymen of the laity. The ſophiſtry and ill-breeding of theſe proceedings are ſo obvious to men who have any pretence to that character, that I need ſay no more either of them or their author.

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SECTION VII.

Dignity of the SCRIPTURE *Language.*

Οἱ δὲ πανημέριοι μολπῇ θεὸν ἱλάσκοντο,
Καλὸν ἀείδοντες παιήονα κοῦροι Ἀχαιῶν,
Μέλποντες Ἑκάεργον· ὁ δ' ϕρένα τέρπετ' ἀκούων.

HOM. Il. I. v. 472.

With hymns divine the joyous banquet ends;
The Peans lengthen'd till the ſun deſcends:
The Greeks *reſtor'd the grateful notes prolong;*
Appollo *liſtens, and approves the ſong.* POPE.

THERE is a certain coldneſs and indifference in the phraſes of our European languages, when they are compared with the Oriental forms of ſpeech: and it happens very luckily, that the Hebrew idioms run into the Engliſh tongue with a particular grace and beauty. Our language has received innumerable elegancies and improvements, from that infuſion of Hebraiſms, which are derived to it out of the poetical paſſages in holy writ. They give a force and energy to our expreſſions, warm and animate our language, and convey our thoughts in more ardent and intenſe phraſes, than any that are to be met with in our own tongue.

There is ſomething ſo pathetic in this kind of diction, that it often ſets the mind in a flame, and makes our hearts burn within us. How cold and dead does a prayer appear, that is compoſed in the moſt elegant and polite forms of ſpeech, which are natural to our tongue, when it is not heightened by that ſolemnity of phraſe, which may be drawn from the ſacred writings. It has been ſaid by ſome of the antients, that if the gods were to talk with men, they would certainly ſpeak in Plato's ſtyle; but I think we may ſay with juſtice, that when mortals converſe with their Creator, they

they cannot do it in ſo proper a ſtyle as in that of the holy Scriptures.

If any one would judge of the beauties of poetry that are to be met with in the divine writings, and examine how kindly the Hebrew manners of ſpeech mix and incorporate with the Engliſh language; after having peruſed the book of pſalms, let him read a literal tranſlation of Horace or Pindar. He will find in theſe two laſt ſuch an abſurdity and confuſion of ſtyle, with ſuch a comparative poverty of imagination, as will make him very ſenſible of what I have been here advancing.

Since we have therefore ſuch a treaſury of words, ſo beautiful in themſelves, and ſo proper for the airs of muſic, I cannot but wonder that perſons of diſtinction ſhould give ſo little attention and encouragement to that kind of muſic which would have its foundation in reaſon, and which would improve our virtue in proportion as it raiſed our delight. The paſſions that are excited by ordinary compoſitions generally flow from ſuch ſilly and abſurd occaſions, that a man is aſhamed to reflect upon them ſeriouſly; but the fear, the love, the ſorrow, the indignation that are awakened in the mind by hymns and anthems, make the heart better, and proceed from ſuch cauſes as are altogether reaſonable and praiſe-worthy. Pleaſure and duty go hand in hand, and the greater our ſatisfaction is, the greater is our religion.

Muſic among thoſe who were ſtyled the choſen people, was a religious art. The ſongs of Zion, which, we have reaſon to believe, were in high repute among the courts of the Eaſtern monarchs, were nothing elſe but pſalms and pieces of poetry that adored or celebrated the ſupreme Being. The greateſt conqueror in this holy nation, after the manner

manner of the old Grecian lyrics, did not only compoſe the words of his divine odes, but generally ſet them to muſic himſelf: after which, his works, though they were conſecrated to the tabernacle, became the national entertainment, as well as the devotion of his people.

The firſt original of the drama was a religious worſhip conſiſting only of a chorus, which was nothing elſe but an hymn to a deity. As luxury and voluptuouſneſs prevailed over innocence and religion, this form of worſhip degenerated into tragedies; in which however the chorus ſo far remembered its firſt office, as to brand every thing that was vicious, and recommend every thing that was laudable; to intercede with heaven for the innocent, and to implore its vengeance on the criminal.

Homer and Heſiod intimate to us how this art ſhould be applied, when they repreſent the muſes as ſurrounding Jupiter, and warbling their hymns about his throne. I might ſhew from innumerable paſſages in antient writers, not only that vocal and inſtrumental muſic were made uſe of in their religious worſhip, but that their moſt favourite diverſions were filled with ſongs and hymns to their reſpective deities. Had we frequent entertainments of this nature among us, they would not a little purify and exalt our paſſions, give our thoughts a proper turn, and cheriſh thoſe divine impulſes in the ſoul, which every one feels that has not ſtifled them by ſenſual and immoderate pleaſures.

Muſic, when thus applied, raiſes noble hints in the mind of the hearer, and fills it with great conceptions. It ſtrengthens devotion, and advances praiſe into rapture. It lengthens out every act of worſhip, and produces more laſting and permanent impreſſions in the mind, than thoſe which accompany

pany any tranſient form of words that are uttered in the ordinary method of religious worſhip. O

———*Fungar inani*
Munere——— Virg. Aen. vi. l. 885.

An unavailing duty I diſcharge.

DR. Tillotſon, in his diſcourſe concerning the danger of all known ſin, both from the light of nature and revelation, after having given us the deſcription of the laſt day out of holy writ, has this remarkable paſſage.

" I appeal to any man, whether this be not a " repreſentation of things very proper and ſuitable " to that great day, wherein he who made the " world ſhall come to judge it? and whether the " wit of man ever deviſed any thing ſo awful, and " ſo agreeable to the majeſty of God, and the ſo- " lemn judgment of the whole world? The de- " ſcription which Virgil makes of the Elyſian " fields, and the infernal regions, how infinitely " do they fall ſhort of the majeſty of the Holy " Scripture, and the deſcription there made of " heaven and hell, and of the great and terrible " day of the Lord! ſo that in compariſon they " are childiſh and trifling; and yet perhaps he had " the moſt regular and moſt governed imagination " of any man that ever lived, and obſerved the " greateſt decorum in his characters and deſcripti- " ons. But who can declare the great things of " God, but he to whom God ſhall reveal them?"

This obſervation was worthy a moſt polite man, and ought to be of authority with all who are ſuch, ſo far as to examine whether he ſpoke that as a man of a juſt taſte and judgment, or advanced

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it merely for the ſervice of his doctrine as a clergyman.

I am very confident whoever reads the Goſpels, with an heart as much prepared in favour of them as when he ſits down to Virgil or Homer, will find no paſſage there which is not told with more natural force than any epiſode in either of thoſe wits, who were the chief of mere mankind.

The laſt thing I read was the 24th chapter of St. Luke, which gives an account of the manner in which our Bleſſed Saviour, after his reſurrection, joined with two diſciples, on the way to Emmaus, as an ordinary traveller, and took the privilege as ſuch to inquire of them what occaſioned a ſadneſs he obſerved in their countenances; or whether it was from any public cauſe? Their wonder that any man ſo near Jeruſalem ſhould be a ſtranger to what had paſſed there; their acknowledgment to one they met accidentally that they had believed in this prophet; and that now, the third day after his death, they were in doubt as to their pleaſing hope which occaſioned the heavineſs he took notice of, are all repreſented in a ſtyle which men of letters call the great and noble ſimplicity. The attention of the diſciples, when he expounded the Scriptures concerning himſelf, his offering to take his leave of them, their fondneſs of his ſtay, and the manifeſtation of the great gueſt whom they had entertained while he was yet at meat with them, are all incidents which wonderfully pleaſe the imagination of a Chriſtian reader; and give to him ſomething of that touch of mind which the brethren felt, when they ſaid one to another, "Did "not our hearts burn within us, while he talked "with us by the way, and while he opened to us "the Scriptures?"

I am very far from pretending to treat theſe matters as they deſerve: but I hope thoſe Gentlemen who are qualified for it, and called to it, will forgive me, and conſider that I ſpeak as a mere ſecular man, impartially conſidering the effect which the ſacred writings will have upon the ſoul of an intelligent reader; and it is ſome argument, that a thing is the immediate work of God, when it ſo infinitely tranſcends all the labours of man. When I look upon Raphael's picture of our Saviour appearing to his diſciples after his reſurrection, I cannot but think the juſt diſpoſition of that piece has in it the force of many volumes on the ſubject: the evangeliſts are eaſily diſtinguiſhed from the reſt by a paſſionate zeal and love which the painter has thrown in their faces; the huddle group of thoſe who ſtand moſt diſtant are admirable repreſentations of men abaſhed with their late unbelief and hardneſs of heart. And ſuch endeavours as this of Raphael, and of all men not called to the altar, are collateral helps not to be depiſed by the miniſters of the Goſpel.

It is with this view that I preſume upon ſubjects of this kind, and men may take up this paper, and be catched by an admonition under the diſguiſe of a diverſion.

All the arts and ſciences ought to be employed in one confederacy againſt the prevailing torrent of vice and impiety; and it will be no ſmall ſtep in the progreſs of religion, if it is as evident as it ought to be, that he wants the beſt taſte and beſt ſenſe a man can have, who is cold to the beauty of holineſs.

As for my part, when I have happened to attend the corps of a friend to his interment, and have ſeen a graceful man at the entrance of a church-yard, who became the dignity of his function, and aſſumed

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an authority which is natural to truth, pronounce "I am the reſurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live; and whoſoever liveth and believeth in me ſhall never die:" I ſay, upon ſuch an occaſion, the retroſpect upon paſt actions between the deceas'd, whom I followed, and myſelf, together with the many little circumſtances that ſtrike upon the ſoul, and alternately give grief and conſolation, have vaniſhed like a dream; and I have been relieved as by a voice from heaven, when the ſolemnity has proceeded, and after a long pauſe I have heard the ſervant of God utter, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth; and though worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God; whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and my eyes ſhall behold, and not another." How have I been raiſed above this world and all its regards, and how well prepared to receive the next ſentence which the holy man has ſpoken, "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord!"

There are, I know, men of heavy temper without genius, who can read theſe expreſſions of Scripture with as much indifference as they do the reſt of theſe looſe papers: however, I will not deſpair but to bring men of wit into a love and admiration of ſacred writings; and, as old as I am, I promiſe myſelf to ſee the day when it ſhall be as much the faſhion among men of politeneſs to admire a rapture of St. Paul, as any fine expreſſion in Virgil or Horace; and to ſee a well-dreſſed young man produce an evangeliſt out of his pocket and be no more out of countenance than if it were a claſſick printed by Elzever.

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It is a gratitude that ought to be paid to Providence by men of diſtinguiſhed faculties, to praiſe and adore the Author of their being with a ſpirit ſuitable to thoſe faculties, and rouze ſlower men by their words, actions, and writings, to a participation of their tranſports and thankſgivings.

SECTION VIII.

Againſt ATHEISM *and* INFIDELITY.

———*Procul O! Procul eſte Profani!*
Virg. Aeneid. VI. l. 258.

Hence! far hence, O ye Profane!

THE watchman who does me particular honours, as being the chief man in the lane, gave ſo very great a thump at my door laſt night, that I awakened at the knock, and heard myſelf complimented with the uſual ſalutation of, Good-morrow, Mr. Bickerſtaff, Good-morrow, my maſters all. The ſilence and darkneſs of the night diſpoſed me to be more than ordinarily ſerious; and as my attention was not drawn out among exterior objects, by the avocations of ſenſe, my thoughts naturally fell upon myſelf. I was conſidering, amidſt the ſtilneſs of the night, what was the proper employment of a thinking being? what were the perfections it ſhould propoſe to itſelf? and, what the end it ſhould aim at? My mind is of ſuch a particular caſt, that the falling of a ſhower of rain, or the whiſtling of wind, at ſuch a time, is apt to fill my thoughts with ſomething awful and ſolemn. I was in this diſpoſition, when our bellman began his midnight homily (which he

has been repeating to us every winter-night for theſe twenty years) with the uſual exordium,

Oh! mortal man, thou that art born in ſin!

Sentiments of this nature, which are in themſelves juſt and reaſonable, however debaſed by the circumſtances that accompany them, do not fail to produce their natural effect in a mind that is not perverted and depraved by wrong notions of gallantry, politeneſs, and ridicule. The temper which I now found myſelf in, as well as the time of the year, put me in mind of thoſe lines in Shakeſpear, wherein, according to his agreeable wildneſs of imagination, he has wrought a country tradition into a beautiful piece of poetry. In the tragedy of Hamlet, where the ghoſt vaniſhes upon the cock's crowing, he takes occaſion to mention its crowing all hours of the night about Chriſtmas time, and to inſinuate a kind of religious veneration for that ſeaſon.

It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some ſay, That ever 'gainſt that ſeaſon comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning ſingeth all night long;
And then, ſay they, no ſpirit walks abroad:
The nights are wholeſome, then no planets ſtrike,
No fairy takes, no witch hath power to charm;
So hallow'd, and ſo gracious is the time.

This admirable author, as well as the beſt and greateſt men of all ages, and of all nations, ſeems to have had his mind throughly ſeaſoned with religion, as is evident by many paſſages in his plays, that would not be ſuffered by a modern audience; and are therefore certain inſtances, that the age he lived in had a much greater ſenſe of virtue than the preſent.

It

It is indeed a melancholy reflexion to conſider, that the Britiſh nation, which is now at a greater height of glory for its councils and conqueſts than it ever was before, ſhould diſtinguiſh itſelf by a certain looſeneſs of principles, and a falling off from thoſe ſchemes of thinking, which conduce to the happineſs and perfection of human nature. This evil comes upon us from the works of a few ſolemn blockheads, that meet together with the zeal and ſerioufneſs of apoſtles, to extirpate common ſenſe, and propagate Infidelity. Theſe are the wretches, who, without any ſhow of wit, learning, or reaſon, publiſh their crude conceptions with an ambition of appearing more wiſe than the reſt of mankind, upon no other pretence, than that of diſſenting from them. One gets by heart a catalogue of title-pages and editions; and immediately to become conſpicuous, declares that he is an unbeliever. Another knows how to write a receipt, or cut up a dog, and forthwith argues againſt the immortality of the ſoul. I have known many a little wit, in the oſtentation of his parts, rally the truth of the Scripture, who was not able to read a chapter in it. Theſe poor wretches talk blaſphemy for want of diſcourſe, and are rather the objects of ſcorn or pity, than of our indignation; but the grave diſputant, that reads and writes, and ſpends all his time in convincing himſelf and the world, that he is no better than a brute, ought to whipped out of a government, as a blot to a civil ſociety, and a defamer of mankind. I love to conſider an Infidel, whether diſtinguiſhed by the title of Deiſt, Atheiſt, or Freethinker, in three different lights, in his ſolitudes, his afflictions, and his laſt moments.

A wiſe man, that lives up to the principles of reaſon and virtue, if one conſiders him in his ſo-

litude, as taking in the ſyſtem of the univerſe, obſerving the mutual dependence and harmony, by which the whole frame of it hangs together, beating down his paſſions, or ſwelling his thoughts with magnificent ideas of Providence, makes a nobler figure in the eye of an intelligent being, than the greateſt conqueror amidſt all the pomps and ſolemnities of a triumph. On the contrary, there is not a more ridiculous animal than an Atheiſt in his retirement. His mind is incapable of rapture or elevation: he can only conſider himſelf as an inſignificant figure in a landſkip, and wandering up and down in a field or a meadow, under the ſame terms as the meaneſt animals about him, and as ſubject to as total a mortality as they, with this aggravation, That he is the only one amongſt them who lies under the apprehenſion of it.

In diſtreſſes, he muſt be of all creatures the moſt helpleſs and forlorn; he feels the whole preſſure of a preſent calamity, without being relieved by the memory of any thing that is paſſed, or the proſpect of any thing that is to come. Annihilation is the greateſt bleſſing that he propoſes to himſelf, and an halter or a piſtol the only refuge he can fly to. But if you would behold one of thoſe gloomy miſcreants in his pooreſt figure, you muſt conſider him under the terrors, or at the approach, of death.

About thirty years ago I was a-ſhipboard with one of theſe vermin, when there aroſe a briſk gale, which could frighten no body but himſelf. Upon the rowling of the ſhip he fell upon his knees, and confeſſed to the Chaplain, that he had been a vile Atheiſt, and had denied a ſupreme Being ever ſince he came to his eſtate. The good man was aſtoniſhed, and a report immediately ran through the ſhip, that there was an Atheiſt upon the upper deck.

Several

Several of the common ſeamen, who had never heard the word before, thought it had been ſome ſtrange fiſh; but they were more ſurpriſed when they ſaw it was a man, and heard out of his own mouth, that he never believed, till that day, that there was a God. As he lay in the agonies of confeſſion, one of the honeſt tarrs whiſpered to the boatſwain, that it would be a good deed to heave him over board. But we were now within ſight of port, when of a ſudden the wind fell, and the penitent relapſed, begging all of us that were preſent, as we were Gentlemen, not to ſay any thing of what had paſſed.

He had not been aſhore above two days, when one of the company began to rally him upon his devotion on ſhipboard, which the other denied in ſo high terms, that it produced the lie on both ſides, and ended in a duel. The Atheiſt was run through the body, and after ſome loſs of blood, became as good a Chriſtian as he was at ſea, till he found that his wound was not mortal. He is at preſent one of the Free-thinkers of the age, and now writing a pamphlet againſt ſeveral received opinions concerning the exiſtence of fairies *.

AFTER having treated of falſe zealots in religion†, I cannot forbear mentioning a monſtrous ſpecies of men, who, one would not think, had any exiſtence in nature, were they not to be met with in ordinary converſation, I mean the zealots in Atheiſm. One would fancy that theſe men, though they fall ſhort, in every other reſpect, of thoſe who make a profeſſion of religion, would at leaſt out-ſhine them in this particular, and be ex-

† *See* Spectator Vol. III. N°. 185.

empt from that ſingle fault which ſeems to grow out of the imprudent fervors of religion: but ſo it is, that Infidelity is propagated with as much fierceneſs and contention, wrath and indignation, as if the ſafety of mankind depended upon it. There is ſomething ſo ridiculous and perverſe in this kind of zealots, that one does not know how to ſet them out in their proper colours. They are a ſort of gameſters who are eternally upon the fret, though they play for nothing. They are perpetually teizing their friends to come over to them, though, at the ſame time, they allow that neither of them ſhall get any thing by the bargain. In ſhort, the zeal of ſpreading Atheiſm is, if poſſible, more abſurd than Atheiſm itſelf.

Since I have mentioned this unaccountable zeal which appears in Atheiſts, and Infidels, I muſt further obſerve that they are likewiſe in a moſt particular manner poſſeſſed with the ſpirit of bigotry. They are wedded to opinions full of contradiction and impoſſibility, and, at the ſame time, look upon the ſmalleſt difficulty in an article of faith as a ſufficient reaſon for rejecting it. Notions that fall in with the common reaſon of mankind, that are conformable to the ſenſe of all ages and all nations, not to mention their tendency for promoting the happineſs of ſocieties, or of particular perſons, are exploded as errors and prejudices; and ſchemes erected in their ſtead that are altogether monſtrous and irrational, and require the moſt extravagant credulity to embrace them. I would fain aſk one of theſe bigotted Infidels, ſuppoſing all the great points of Atheiſm, as the caſual or eternal formation of the world, the materiality of a thinking ſubſtance, the mortality of the ſoul, the fortuitous organization of the body, the motions and gravitation of matter, with the like particulars, were laid together

and

and formed into a kind of creed, according to the opinions of the moſt celebrated Atheiſts, I ſay, ſuppoſing ſuch a creed as this were formed, and impoſed upon any one people in the world, whether it would not require an infinitely greater meaſure of faith, than any ſet of articles which they ſo violently oppoſe. Let me therefore adviſe this generation of wranglers, for their own and for the public good, to act at leaſt ſo conſiſtently with themſelves, as not to burn with zeal for irreligion, and with bigotry for nonſenſe. C

Cœlum ipſum petimus ſtultitiâ.——
Hor. Od. III. I. 1. v. 38.

——*Scarce the Gods, and heavenly climes*
Are ſafe from our audacious crimes. DRYDEN.

UPON my return to my lodgings laſt night, I found a letter from my worthy friend the clergyman, whom I have given ſome account of in my former papers. He tells me in it, that he was particularly pleaſed with the latter part of my yeſterday's ſpeculation; and at the ſame time incloſed the following eſſay, which he deſires me to publiſh as the ſequel of that diſcourſe. It conſiſts partly of uncommon reflexions, and partly of ſuch as have been already uſed, but now ſet in a ſtronger light.

" A believer may be excuſed by the moſt har-
" dened Atheiſt for endeavouring to make him a
" convert, becauſe he does it with an eye to both
" their intereſts. The Atheiſt is inexcuſable who
" tries to gain over a believer, becauſe he does not
" propoſe the doing himſelf or believer any good
" by ſuch a converſion.

" The proſpect of a future ſtate is the ſecret
" comfort and refreſhment of my ſoul; it is that

" which

" which makes nature look gay about me; it " doubles all my pleaſures, and ſupports me under " all my afflictions. I can look at diſappointments " and misfortunes, pain and ſickneſs, death itſelf, " and what is worſe than death, the loſs of thoſe " who are deareſt to me, with indifference, ſo long " as I keep in view the pleaſures of eternity, and " the ſtate of being, in which there will be no " fears nor apprehenſions, pains nor ſorrows, ſick- " neſs nor ſeparation. Why will any man be ſo " impertinently officious, as to tell me all this is " only fancy and deluſion? Is there any merit in " being the meſſenger of ill news? If it is a dream " let me enjoy it, ſince it makes me both the hap- " pier and the better man.

" I muſt confeſs I do not know how to truſt a " man who believes neither heaven nor hell, or, " in other words, a future ſtate of rewards and " puniſhments. Not only natural ſelf-love, but " reaſon directs us to promote our own intereſt a- " bove all things. It can never be for the intereſt " of a believer to do me a miſchief, becauſe he is " ſure, upon the balance of accompts, to find him- " ſelf a loſer by it. On the contrary, if he con- " ſiders his own welfare in his behaviour towards " me, it will lead him to do me all the good he " can, and at the ſame time reſtrain him from do- " ing me an injury. An unbeliever does not act " like a reaſonable creature, if he favours me con- " trary to his preſent intereſt, or does not diſtreſs me " when it turns to his preſent advantage. Honour " and good-nature may indeed ty up his hands; " but as theſe would be very much ſtrengthned by " reaſon and principle, ſo without them they are " only inſtincts, or wavering unſettled notions, " which reſt on no foundation.

" Inſi-

" Infidelity has been attacked with ſo good ſuc-
" ceſs of late years, that it is driven out of all its
" out-works. The Atheiſt has not found his poſt
" tenible, and is therefore retired into Deiſm, and
" a diſbelief of revealed religion only. But the
" truth of it is, the greateſt number of this ſet of
" men, are thoſe who, for want of a virtuous e-
" ducation, or examining the grounds of religion,
" know ſo very little of the matter in queſtion,
" that their Infidelity is but another term for their
" ignorance.

" As folly and inconſiderateneſs are the founda-
" tions of Infidelity, the great pillars and ſupports
" of it are either a vanity of appearing wiſer than
" the reſt of mankind, or an oſtentation of courage
" in deſpiſing the terrors of another world, which
" have ſo great an influence on what they call
" weaker minds; or an averſion to a belief that
" muſt cut them off from many of thoſe pleaſures
" they propoſe to themſelves, and fill them with
" remorſe for many of thoſe they have already
" taſted.

" The great received articles of the Chriſtian re-
" ligion have been ſo clearly proved, from the au-
" thority of that divine revelation in which they
" are deliverd, that it is impoſſible for thoſe who
" have ears to hear and eyes to ſee, not to be con-
" vinced of them. But were it poſſible for any
" thing in the Chriſtian faith to be erroneous, I
" can find no ill conſequences in adhereing to it.
" The great points of the incarnation and ſuffe-
" rings of our Saviour, produce naturally ſuch ha-
" bits of virtue in the mind of man, that, I ſay,
" ſuppoſing it were poſſible for us to be miſtaken
" in them, the Infidel himſelf muſt at leaſt allow
" that no other ſyſtem of religion could ſo effectu-
" ally contribute to the heightening of morality.

" They

" They give us great ideas of the dignity of hu-
" man nature, and of the love which the ſupreme
" Being bears to his creatures, and conſequently
" engage us in the higheſt acts of our duty to-
" wards our Creator, our neighbour and ourſelves.
" How many noble arguments has St. Paul raiſed
" from the chief articles of our religion, for the
" advancing of morality in its three great branches?
" To give a ſingle example in each kind: What
" can be a ſtronger motive to a firm truſt and re-
" liance on the mercies of our Maker, than the
" giving us his Son to ſuffer for us? What can
" make us love and eſteem even the moſt in-
" conſiderable of mankind, more than the
" thought that Chriſt died for him? Or what
" diſpoſe us to ſet a ſtricter guard upon the puri-
" ty of our own hearts, than our being members
" of Chriſt, and a part of the ſociety of which
" that immaculate perſon is the head? But
" theſe are only a ſpecimen of thoſe admirable
" enforcements of morality which the Apoſtle has
" drawn from the hiſtory of our bleſſed Saviour.

" If our modern Infidels conſidered theſe mat-
" ters with that candour and ſerioufneſs which
" they deſerve, we ſhould not ſee them act with
" ſuch a ſpirit of bitterneſs, arrogance, and ma-
" lice: they would not be raiſing ſuch inſignifi-
" cant cavils, doubts, and ſcruples, as may be
" ſtarted againſt every thing that is not capable
" of mathematical demonſtration; in order to un-
" ſettle the minds of the ignorant, diſturb the pu-
" blic peace, ſubvert morality, and throw all
" things into confuſion and diſorder. If none of
" theſe reflexions can have any influence on them,
" there is one that perhaps may, becauſe it is ad-
" apted to their vanity, by which they ſeem to be
" guided much more than their reaſon. I would

" therefore

" therefore have them conſider, that the wiſeſt " and beſt of men in all ages of the world, have " been thoſe who lived up to the religion of their " country, when they ſaw nothing in it oppoſite " to morality, and to the beſt lights they had of " the Divine nature. Pythagoras's firſt rule di- " rects us to worſhip the gods as it is ordained " by law, for that is the moſt natural interpretation " of the precept. Socrates, who was the moſt " renowned among the Heathens both for wiſ- " dom and virtue, in his laſt moments deſires " his friends to offer a cock to Æſculapius; " doubtleſs out of a ſubmiſſive deference to the " eſtabliſhed worſhip of his country. Xenophon " tells us, that his prince, (whom he ſets forth " as a pattern of perfection), when he found his " death approaching, offered ſacrifices on the " mountains to the Perſian Jupiter, and the ſun, " according to the cuſtoms of the Perſians; for " thoſe are the words of the hiſtorian. Nay, the " Epicureans and atomical philoſophers ſhewed " a very remarkable modeſty in this particular; " for, though the being of a God was entirely " repugnant to their ſchemes of natural philoſo- " phy, they contented themſelves with the de- " nial of a Providence, aſſerting at the ſame time " the exiſtence of gods in general; becauſe they " would not ſhock the common belief of man- " kind, and the religion of their country." L

Qui

Quâ ratione queas traducere leniter aevum :
Ne te ſemper inops agitet vexetque cupido :
Ne pavor et rerum mediocriter utilium ſpes.
Hor. l. 1. Epiſt. XVIII. v. 97.

How thou mayſt live, how ſpend thine age in peace :
Leſt avarice, ſtill poor, diſturb thy eaſe :
Or fears ſhould ſhake, or cares thy mind abuſe,
Or ardent hope for things of little uſe. CREECH.

HAVING endeavourd in my laſt Saturday's paper to ſhew the great excellency of faith, I ſhall here conſider what are the proper means of ſtrengthening and confirming it in the mind of man. Thoſe who delight in reading books of controverſy, which are written on both ſides of the queſtion in points of faith, do very ſeldom arrive at a fixed and ſettled habit of it. They are one day entirely convinced of its important truths, and the next meet with ſomething that ſhakes and diſturbs them. The doubt which was laid revives again, and ſhews itſelf in new difficulties, and that generally for this reaſon, becauſe the mind, which is perpetually toſſed in controverſies and diſputes, is apt to forget the reaſons which had once ſet it at reſt, and to be diſquieted with any former perplexity, when it appears in a new ſhape, or is ſtarted by a different hand. As nothing is more laudable than an inquiry after truth, ſo nothing is more irrational than to paſs away our whole lives, without determining ourſelves one way or other in thoſe points which are of the laſt importance to us. There are indeed many things from which we may with-hold our aſſent; but in caſes by which we are to regulate our lives, it is the greateſt abſurdity to be wavering and unſettled, without cloſing with that ſide which appears the moſt ſafe and the moſt probable.

The

The firſt rule therefore which I ſhall lay down, is this, that when by reading or diſcourſe, we find ourſelves throughly convinced of the truth of any article, and of the reaſonableneſs of our belief in it, we ſhould never after ſuffer ourſelves to call it into queſtion. We may perhaps forget the arguments which occaſioned our conviction, but we ought to remember the ſtrength they had with us, and therefore ſtill to retain the conviction which they once produced. This is no more than what we do in every art or ſcience, nor is it poſſible to act otherwiſe, conſidering the weakneſs and limitations of our intellectual faculties. It was thus that Latimer, one of the glorious army of martyrs, who introduced the reformation in *England*, behaved himſelf in that great conference which was managed between the moſt learned among the Proteſtants and Papiſts in the Reign of Queen Mary. This venerable old man knowing how his abilities were impaired by age, and that it was impoſſible for him to recollect all thoſe reaſons which had directed him in the choice of his religion, left his companions who were in the full poſſeſſion of their parts and learning, to baffle and confound their antagoniſts by the force of reaſon. As for himſelf, he only repeated to his adverſaries the articles in which he firmly believed, and in the profeſſion of which he was determined to die. It is in this manner that the mathematician proceeds upon propoſitions which he has once demonſtrated; and tho' the demonſtration may have ſlipt out of his memory, he builds upon the truth, becauſe he knows it was demonſtrated. This rule is abſolutely neceſſary for weaker minds, and in ſome meaſure for men of the greateſt abilities.

But to theſe laſt I would propoſe, in the ſecond place, that they ſhould lay up in their memories, and always keep by them in a readineſs, thoſe arguments which appear to them of the greateſt ſtrength, and which cannot be got over by all the doubts and cavils of Infidelity.

But, in the third place, there is nothing which ſtrengthens faith more than morality. Faith and morality naturally produce each other. A man is quickly convinced of the truth of religion, who finds it is not againſt his intereſt that it ſhould be true. The pleaſure he receives at preſent, and the happineſs which he promiſes himſelf from it hereafter, will both diſpoſe him very powerfully to give credit to it, according to the ordinary obſervation, "That we are eaſy to be-"lieve what we wiſh." It is very certain, that a man of ſound reaſon cannot forbear cloſing with religion upon an impartial examination of it; but, at the ſame time, it is as certain, that faith is kept alive in us, and gathers ſtrength from practice more than from ſpeculation.

There is ſtill another method which is more perſuaſive than any of the former, and that is, an habitual adoration of the ſupreme Being, as well in conſtant acts of mental worſhip, as in outward forms. The devout man does not only believe, but feels there is a Deity. He has actual ſenſations of him; his experience concurs with his reaſon; he ſees him more and more in all his intercourſes with him, and even in this life almoſt loſes his faith in conviction.

The laſt method which I ſhall mention for the giving life to a man's faith, is frequent retirement from the world, accompanied with religious meditation. When a man thinks of any thing in the darkneſs of the night, whatever deep impreſſions

impreſſions it may make in his mind, they are apt to vaniſh as ſoon as the day breaks about him. The light and noiſe of the day, which are perpetually ſoliciting his ſenſes, and calling off his attention, wear out of his mind the thoughts that imprinted themſelves in it, with ſo much ſtrength, during the ſilence and darkneſs of the night. A man finds the ſame difference as to himſelf in a croud, and in a ſolitude: the mind is ſtunned and dazzled amidſt that variety of objects which preſs upon her in a great city: ſhe cannot apply herſelf to the conſideration of thoſe things which are of the utmoſt concern to her. The cares or pleaſures of the world ſtrike in with every thought, and a multitude of vicious examples give a kind of juſtification to our folly. In our retirements every thing diſpoſes us to be ſerious. In courts and cities we are entertained with the works of men; in the country with thoſe of God. One is the province of art, the other of nature. Faith and devotion naturally grow in the mind of every reaſonable man, who ſees the impreſſions of divine power and wiſdom in every object on which he caſts his eye. The ſupreme Being has made the beſt arguments for his own exiſtence, in the formation of the heavens and the earth, and theſe are arguments which a man of ſenſe cannot forbear attending to, who is out of the noiſe and hurry of human affairs. Ariſtotle ſays, that ſhould a man live under ground, and there converſe with works of art and mechaniſm, and ſhould afterwards be brought up into the open day, and ſee the ſeveral glories of the heaven and earth, he would immediately pronounce them the works of ſuch a being as we define God to be. The Pſalmiſt has very beautiful ſtrokes of poetry to this purpoſe in that exalted ſtrain, "The heavens declare the glory of

" God; and the firmament ſheweth his handy-
" work. One day telleth another; and one night
" certifieth another. There is neither ſpeech nor
" language: but their voices are heard among
" them. Their ſound is gone out into all lands:
" and their words into the ends of the world."
As ſuch a bold and ſublime manner of thinking furniſhes very noble matter for an ode, the reader may ſee it wrought into the following one.

I.

The ſpacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal ſky,
And ſpangled heav'ns, a ſhining frame,
Their great Original proclaim:
Th' unwearied ſun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power diſplay,
And publiſhes to every land
The work of an almighty hand.

II.

Soon as the evening ſhades prevail,
The moon takes up the wond'rous tale,
And nightly to the liſtning earth
Repeats the ſtory of her birth:
Whilſt all the ſtars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they rowl,
And ſpread the truth from pole to pole.

III.

What though, in ſolemn ſilence all
Move round the dark terreſtrial ball?
What though no real voice nor ſound
Amid their radiant orbs be found?

In

In reaſon's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever ſinging as they ſhine,
" *The hand that made us is divine.*

SECTION IX.

Againſt the Modern FREE-THINKERS.

SIR,

" THERE arrived in this neighbourhood, two
" days ago, one of your gay Gentlemen of
" the town, who being attended at his entry with
" a ſervant of his own, beſides a countryman he
" had taken up for a guide, excited the curioſity
" of the village to learn whence and what he
" might be. The countryman (to whom they
" applied as moſt eaſy of acceſs) knew little more
" than that the Gentleman came from London to
" travel and ſee faſhions, and was, as he heard ſay,
" a Free-thinker: what religion that might be,
" he could not tell; and for his own part, if they
" had not told him the man was a Free-thinker,
" he ſhould have gueſſed by his way of talking, he
" was little better than a Heathen; excepting on-
" ly that he had been a good Gentleman to him,
" and made him drunk twice in one day, over
" and above what they had bargained for.

" I do not look upon the ſimplicity of this,
" and ſeveral odd inquiries with which I ſhall
" trouble you, to be wondered at; much leſs can
" I think that our youths of fine wit, and enlar-
" ged underſtandings, have any reaſon to laugh.
" There is no neceſſity that every ſquire in Great
" Britain ſhould know what the word Free-thinker
" ſtands for; but it were much to be wiſhed, that
" they who value themſelves upon that conceited

" title, were a little better inſtructed in what it " ought to ſtand for; and that they would not " perſuade themſelves a man is really and truly " a Free-thinker in any tolerable ſenſe, merely " by virtue of his being an Atheiſt, or an Infidel " of any other diſtinction. It may be doubted " with good reaſon, whether there ever was in " nature a more abject, ſlaviſh, and bigotted ge- " neration than the tribe of *Beaux Eſprits*, at " preſent ſo prevailing in this iſland. Their pre- " tenſion to be Free-thinkers, is no other than " rakes have to be free-livers, and ſavages to be " free-men, that is, they can think whatever they " have a mind to, and give themſelves up to " whatever conceit the extravagancy of their in- " clination, or their fancy, ſhall ſuggeſt; they " can think as wildly as talk and act, and will " not endure that their wit ſhould be controuled " by ſuch formal things as decency and com- " mon ſenſe: deduction, coherence, conſiſtency, " and all the rules of reaſon they accordingly diſ- " dain, as too preciſe and mechanical for men " of a liberal education.

" This, as far as I could ever learn from their " writings, or my own obſervation, is a true " account of the Britiſh Free-thinker. Our vi- " ſitant here, who gave occaſion to this paper, " has brought with him a new ſyſtem of com- " mon ſenſe, the particulars of which I am not " yet acquainted with, but will loſe no oppor- " tunity of informing myſelf whether it contain " any thing worth Mr. SPECTATOR's no- " tice. In the mean time, Sir, I cannot but think " it would be for the good of mankind, if you " would take this ſubject into your own conſide- " ration, and convince the hopeful youth of our " nation, that licentiouſneſs is not freedom; or,

" if

" if ſuch a paradox will not be underſtood, that a " prejudice towards Atheiſm is not impartially."

I am, Sir, your moſt humble Servant,

T PHILONOUS.

Quicquid eſt illud, quod ſentit, quod ſapit, quod vult, quod viget, coeleſte et divinum eſt, ob eamque rem aeternum ſit neceſſe eſt.
Tull.

Whatever that principle is, which lives, perceives, underſtands, and wills, the ſame is heavenly and divine, and conſequently eternal.

I AM diverted from the account I was giving the town of my particular concerns, by caſting my eye upon a treatiſe, which I could not overlook without an inexcuſable negligence, and want of concern for all the civil, as well as religious intereſts of mankind. This piece has for its title, " A diſcourſe of Free-thinking, occaſioned by the " riſe and growth of a ſect called Free-thinkers." The author very methodically enters upon his argument, and ſays, " By Free-thinking, I mean " the uſe of the underſtanding in endeavouring to " find out the meaning of any propoſition what- " ſoever, in conſidering the nature of the evi- " dience for, or againſt, and in judging of it ac- " cording to the ſeeming force or weakneſs of the " evidence." As ſoon as he has delivered this definition, from which one would expect he did not deſign to ſhew a particular inclination for, or againſt, any thing before he had conſidered it, he gives up all title to the character of a Free-thinker, with the moſt apparent prejudice againſt a body of men, whom, of all other, a good man would be moſt careful not to violate, I mean, men in holy orders. Perſons who have devoted themſelves to the

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ſervice of God, are venerable to all who fear him; and it is a certain characteriſtic of a diſſolute and ungoverned mind, to rail or ſpeak diſreſpectfully of them in general. It is certain, that in ſo great a croud of men ſome will intrude, who are of tempers very unbecoming their function; but becauſe ambition and avarice are ſometimes lodged in that boſom, which ought to be the dwelling of ſanctity and devotion, muſt this unreaſonable author vilify the whole order? He has not taken the leaſt care to diſguiſe his being an enemy to the perſons againſt whom he writes, nor any where granted that the inſtitution of religious men to ſerve at the altar, and inſtruct ſuch who are not as wiſe as himſelf, is at all neceſſary or deſirable; but proceeds without the leaſt apology, to undermine their credit, and fruſtrate their labours: whatever clergymen, in diſputes againſt each other, have unguardedly uttered, is here recorded in ſuch a manner as to affect religion itſelf, by wreſting conceſſions to its diſadvantage from its own teachers. If this be true, as ſure any man that reads the diſcourſe muſt allow it is; and if religion is the ſtrongeſt tie of human ſociety; in what manner are we to treat this our common enemy, who promotes the growth of ſuch a ſect as he calls Free-thinkers? He that ſhould burn a houſe, and juſtify the action, by aſſerting he is a free agent, would be more excuſable than this author in uttering what he has from the right of a Free-thinker: but they are a ſet of dry, joyleſs, dull fellows, who want capacities and talents to make a figure amongſt mankind upon benevolent and generous principles, that think to ſurmount their own natural meanneſs, by laying offences in the way of ſuch as make it their endeavour to excel upon the received maxims and honeſt arts of life. If it were poſſible to laugh at

ſo

ſo melancholy an affair as what hazards ſalvation, it would be no unpleaſant inquiry to aſk what ſatisfaction they reap, what extraordinary gratification of ſenſe, or what delicious libertiniſm this ſect of Free-thinkers enjoy, after getting looſe of the laws which confine the paſſions of other men? Would it not be a matter of mirth to find, after all, that the heads of this growing ſect are ſober wretches, who prate whole evenings over coffee, and have not themſelves fire enough to be any farther debauchees, than merely in principle? Theſe ſages of iniquity are, it ſeems, themſelves only ſpeculatively wicked, and are contented that all the abandoned young men of the age are kept ſafe from reflexion by dabbling in their rhapſodies, without taſting the pleaſures for which their doctrines leave them unaccountable. Thus do heavy mortals, only to gratify a dry pride of heart, give up the intereſts of another world, without enlarging their gratifications in this; but it is certain that there are a ſort of men that can puzzle truth, but cannot enjoy the ſatisfaction of it. This ſame Free-thinker is a creature unacquainted with the emotions which poſſeſs great minds when they are turned for religion, and it is apparent that he is untouched with any ſuch ſenſation as the rapture of devotion. Whatever one of theſe ſcorners may think, they certainly want parts to be devout; and a ſenſe of piety towards heaven, as well as the ſenſe of any thing elſe, is lively and warm in proportion to the faculties of the head and heart. This Gentleman may be aſſured he has not a taſte for what he pretends to decry, and the poor man is certainly more a blockhead than an Atheiſt. I muſt repeat, that he wants capacity to reliſh what true piety is; and he is as capable of writing an heroic poem, as making a fervent prayer. When men are thus

low

low and narrow in their apprehenſions of things, and at the ſame time vain, they are naturally led to think every thing they do not underſtand, not to be underſtood. Their contradiction to what is urged by others, is a neceſſary conſequence of their incapacity to receive it. The Atheiſtical fellows, who appeared the laſt age, did not ſerve the devil for nought; but revelled in exceſſes ſuitable to their principles, while in theſe unhappy days miſchief is done for miſchief's ſake. Theſe Free-thinkers, who lead the lives of recluſe ſtudents, for no other purpoſe but to diſturb the ſentiments of other men, put me in mind of the monſtrous recreation of thoſe late wild youths, who, without provocation, had a wantonneſs in ſtabbing and defacing thoſe they met with. When ſuch writers as this, who has no ſpirit but that of malice, pretend to inform the age, Mohocks and cut-throats may well ſet up for wits and men of pleaſure.

It will be perhaps expected, that I ſhould produce ſome inſtances of the ill intention of this Free-thinker, to ſupport the treatment I here give him. In his 52d page he ſays,

"2dly, The prieſts throughout the world differ "about Scriptures, and the authority of Scri- "ptures. The Bramins have a book of Scri- "pture called the Shaſter. The Perſees have their "Zundavaſtaw. The Bonzes of China have "books written by the diſciples of Fo-he, whom "they call the God and Saviour of the world, who "was born to teach the way of ſalvation, and to "give ſatisfaction for all mens ſins. The Tala- "poins of Siam have a book of Scripture, written "by Sommonocodom, who, the Siameſe ſay, was "born of a virgin, and was the God expected "by the univerſe. The Dervizes have their Al- "coran."

I

I believe there is no one will diſpute the author's great impartiality in ſetting down the accounts of theſe different religions. And I think it is pretty evident he delivers the matter with an air, that betrays the hiſtory of one born of a virgin, has as much authority with him, from St. Sommonocodom, as from St. Matthew. Thus he treats revelation. Then, as to philoſophy, he tells you, p. 136. "Cicero produces this as an inſtance of a "probable opinion, that they who ſtudy philoſophy "do not believe there are any gods;" and then, from conſideration of various notions he affirms Tully concludes, "That there can be nothing af-"ter death."

As to what he miſrepreſents of Tully, the ſhort ſentence on the head of this paper is enough to oppoſe; but who can have patience to reflect upon the aſſemblage of impoſtures among which our author places the religion of his country? As for my part, I cannot ſee any poſſible interpretation to give this work, but a deſign to ſubvert and ridicule the authority of Scripture. The peace and tranquillity of the nation, and regards even above thoſe, are ſo much concerned in this matter, that it is difficult to expreſs ſufficient ſorrow for the offender, or indignation againſt him. But if ever man deſerved to be denied the common benefits of air and water, it is the author of a diſcourſe of Free-thinking.

——— *mentiſque capacius altae.* Ovid. l. 1. v. 76.

Capacious of a more exalted mind.

AS I was, the other day, taking a ſolitary walk in St. Paul's, I indulged my thoughts in the purſuit of a certain analogy between the fabric and the Chriſtian

Chriſtian church in the largeſt ſenſe. The divine order and œconomy of the one ſeemed to be emblematically ſet forth by the juſt, plain, and majeſtic architecture of the other. And as the one conſiſts of a great variety of parts united in the ſame regular deſign, according to the trueſt art, and moſt exact proportion; ſo the other contains a decent ſubordination of members, various ſacred inſtitutions, ſublime doctrines, and ſolid precepts of morality digeſted into the ſame deſign, and with an admirable concurrence tending to one view, the happineſs and exaltation of human nature.

In the midſt of my contemplation I beheld a fly upon one of the pillars; and it ſtraightway came into my head, that this ſame fly was a Free-thinker. For it required ſome comprehenſion in the eye of the ſpectator to take in at one view the various parts of the building, in order to obſerve their ſymmetry and deſign. But to the fly, whoſe proſpect was confined to a little part of one of the ſtones of a ſingle pillar, the joint beauty of the whole, or the diſtinct uſe of its parts, were inconſpicuous, and nothing could appear but ſmall inequalities in the ſurface of the hewn ſtone, which, in the view of that inſect, ſeemed ſo many deformed rocks and precipices.

The thoughts of a Free-thinker are employed on certain minute Particularities of religion, the difficulty of a ſingle text, or the unaccountableneſs of ſome ſtep of Providence or point of doctrine to his narrow faculties, without comprehending the ſcope and deſign of Chriſtianity, the perfection to which it raiſeth human nature, the light it hath ſhed abroad in the world, and the cloſe connexion it hath as well with the good of publick ſocieties, as with that of particular perſons.

This

This raiſed in me ſome reflexions on that frame or diſpoſition which is called largeneſs of mind, its neceſſity towards forming a true judgment of things, and where the ſoul is not incurably ſtinted by nature, what are the likelieſt methods to give it enlargement.

It is evident that philoſophy doth open and enlarge the mind, by the general views to which men are habituated in that ſtudy, and by the contemplation of more numerous and diſtant objects than fall within the ſphere of mankind in the ordinary purſuits of life. Hence it comes to paſs, that philoſophers judge of moſt things very differently from the vulgar. Some inſtances of this may be ſeen in the Theaetetus of Plato, where Socrates makes the following remarks among others of the like nature.

"When a philoſopher hears ten thouſand acres "mentioned as a great eſtate, he looks upon it "as an inconſiderable ſpot, having been uſed to "contemplate the whole globe of earth. Or "when he beholds a man elated with the nobi-"lity of his race, becauſe he can reckon a ſeries "of ſeven rich anceſtors, the philoſopher thinks "him a ſtupid ignorant fellow, whoſe mind cannot "reach to a general view of human nature, which "would ſhew him that we have all innumerable "anceſtors, among whom are crowds of rich and "poor, kings and ſlaves, Greeks and Barbarians." Thus far Socrates, who was accounted wiſer than the reſt of the Heathens, for notions which approach the neareſt to Chriſtianity.

As all parts and branches of Philoſophy, or ſpeculative knowledge, are uſeful in that reſpect, Aſtronomy is peculiarly adapted to remedy a little and narrow ſpirit. In that ſcience, there are good reaſons aſſigned to prove the ſun an hundred thou-

ſand times bigger than our earth; and the diſtance of the ſtars ſo prodigious, that a cannon-bullet, continuing in its ordinary rapid motion, would not arrive from hence at the neareſt of them in the ſpace of an hundred and fifty thouſand years. Theſe ideas wonderfully dilate and expand the mind. There is ſomething in the immenſity of this diſtance, that ſhocks and overwhelms the imagination, it is too big for the graſp of the human intellect: eſtates, provinces, and kingdoms, vaniſh at its preſence. It were to be wiſhed a certain prince, who hath encouraged the ſtudy of it in his ſubjects, had been himſelf a proficient in Aſtronomy. This might have ſhewed him how mean an ambition that was, which terminated in a ſmall part of what is itſelf but a point, in reſpect of that part of the univerſe which lies within our view.

But the Chriſtian Religion ennobleth and enlargeth the mind beyond any other profeſſion or ſcience whatſoever. Upon that ſcheme, while the earth, and the tranſient enjoyments of this life, ſhrink in the narroweſt dimenſions, and are accounted as "the duſt of a balance, the drop of a "bucket, yea leſs than nothing," the intellectual world opens wider to our view: the perfections of the Deity, the nature and excellence of virtue, the dignity of the human ſoul, are diſplayed in the largeſt characters. The mind of man ſeems to adapt itſelf to the different nature of its objects; it is contracted and debaſed by being converſant in little and low things, and feels a proportionable enlargement ariſing from the contemplation of theſe great and ſublime ideas.

The greatneſs of things is comparative; and this does not only hold, in reſpect of extenſion, but likewiſe in reſpect of dignity, duration, and all kinds of perfection. Aſtronomy opens the mind, and

and alters our judgment, with regard to the magnitude of extended beings; but Chriſtianity produceth an univerſal greatneſs of ſoul. Philoſophy increaſeth our views in every reſpect; but Chriſtianity extends them to a degree beyond the light of nature.

How mean muſt the moſt exalted potentate upon earth appear to that eye which takes in innumerable orders of bleſſed ſpirits, differing in glory and perfection? How little muſt the amuſements of ſenſe, and the ordinary occupations of mortal men, ſeem to one who is engaged in ſo noble a purſuit, as the aſſimilation of himſelf to the Deity, which is the proper employment of every Chriſtian!

And the improvement which grows from habituating the mind to the comprehenſive views of religion, muſt not be thought wholly to regard the underſtanding. Nothing is of greater force to ſubdue the inordinate motions of the heart, and to regulate the will. Whether a man be actuated by his paſſions or his reaſon, theſe are firſt wrought upon by ſome object, which ſtirs the ſoul in proportion to its apparent dimenſions. Hence irreligious men, whoſe ſhort proſpects are filled with earth, and ſenſe, and mortal life, are invited, by theſe mean ideas, to actions proportionably little and low. But a mind, whoſe views are enlightened and extended by religion, is animated to nobler purſuits, by more ſublime and remote objects.

There is not any inſtance of weakneſs in the Free-thinkers that raiſes my indignation more, than their pretending to ridicule Chriſtians, as men of narrow underſtandings, and to paſs themſelves upon the world for perſons of ſuperior ſenſe, and more enlarged views. But I leave it to any impartial man to judge which hath the nobler ſentiments, which the greater views; he whoſe notions are

ſtinted to a few miſerable inlets of ſenſe, or he whoſe ſentiments are raiſed above the common taſte, by the anticipation of thoſe delights which will ſatiate the ſoul, when the whole capacity of her nature is branched out into new faculties? he who looks for nothing beyond this ſhort ſpan of duration, or he whoſe aims are co-extended with the endleſs length of eternity? he who derives his ſpirit from the elements, or he who thinks it was inſpired by the Almighty?

SIR,

" SINCE you have not refuſed to inſert matters " of a theological nature in thoſe excellent " papers, with which you daily both inſtruct and " divert us, I earneſtly deſire you to print the fol- " lowing paper. The notions therein advanced " are, for ought I know, new to the Engliſh read- " er, and, if they are true, will afford room for " many uſeful inferences.

" No man that reads the Evangeliſts, but muſt " obſerve that our bleſſed Saviour does upon every " occaſion bend all his force and zeal to rebuke and " correct the hypocriſy of the Phariſees. Upon " that ſubject he ſhews a warmth which one meets " with in no other part of his ſermons. They " were ſo enraged at the public detection of their " ſecret villanies, by one who ſaw through all their " diſguiſes, that they joined in the proſecution of " him; which was ſo vigorous, that Pilate at laſt " conſented to his death. The frequency and ve- " hemence of theſe reprehenſions of our Lord, " have made the word *Phariſee* to be looked upon " as odious among Chriſtians, and to mean only " one who lays the utmoſt ſtreſs upon the out- " ward, ceremonial, and ritual part of his religi- " on,

" on, without having ſuch an inward ſenſe of it,
" as would lead him to a general and ſincere ob-
" ſervance of thoſe duties which can only ariſe from
" the heart, and which cannot be ſuppoſed to
" ſpring from a deſire of applauſe or profit.

" This is plain from the hiſtory of the life and
" actions of our Lord, in the four Evangeliſts.
" One of them, St. Luke, continued his hiſtory
" down in a ſecond part, which we commonly call
" the Acts of the Apoſtles. Now it is obſervable,
" that in this ſecond part, in which he gives a par-
" ticular account of what the apoſtles did and ſuf-
" fered at Jeruſalem upon their firſt entering up-
" on their commiſſion, and alſo of what St. Paul
" did after he was conſecrated to the apoſtleſhip
" till his journey to Rome, we find not only no
" oppoſition to Chriſtianity from the Phariſees, but
" ſeveral ſignal occaſions in which they aſſiſted its
" firſt teachers, when the Chriſtian church was
" in its infant ſtate. The true, zealous and hearty
" perſecutors of Chriſtianity at that time were the
" Sadducees, whom we may truly call the Free-
" thinkers among the Jews. They believed nei-
" ther reſurrection, nor angel, nor ſpirit, *i. e.* in
" plain Engliſh, they were Deiſts at leaſt, if not
" Atheiſts. They could outwardly comply with,
" and conform to the eſtabliſhment in church and
" ſtate, and they pretended forſooth to belong
" only to a particular ſect; and becauſe there was
" nothing in the law of Moſes, which, in ſo ma-
" ny words, aſſerted a reſurrection, they appeared
" to adhere to that in a particular manner beyond
" any other part of the Old Teſtament. Theſe
" men therefore juſtly dreaded the ſpreading of
" Chriſtianity after the aſcenſion of our Lord, be-
" cauſe it was wholly founded upon his reſurrecti-
" on.

" Accordingly, therefore, when Peter and John " had cured the lame man at the beautiful gate of " the temple, and had thereby raiſed a wonderful " expectation of themſelves among the people, the " prieſts and Sadducees, Acts iv. clapt them up, and " ſent them away for the firſt time with a ſevere re- " primand. Quickly after, when the deaths of A- " nanias and Saphira, and many miracles wrought " after thoſe ſevere inſtances of the apoſtolical " power had alarmed the prieſts, who looked up- " on the temple-worſhip, and conſequently their " bread, to be ſtruck at; theſe prieſts, and all " they that were with them, who were of the ſect " of the Sadducees, impriſoned the apoſtles, in- " tending to examine them in the great council the " next day: where, when the council met, and " the prieſts and Sadducees propoſed to proceed " with great rigour againſt them, we find that Ga- " maliel, a very eminent Phariſee, St. Paul's maſter, " a man of great authority among the people, many " of whoſe determinations we have ſtill preſerved " in the body of the Jewiſh traditions, commonly " called the *Talmud*, oppoſed their heat, and told " them, for ought they knew, the apoſtles might " be acted by the Spirit of God, and that in ſuch a " caſe it would be in vain to oppoſe them; ſince, if " they did ſo, they would only fight againſt God, " whom they could not overcome. Gamaliel was " ſo conſiderable a man amongſt his own ſect, that " we may reaſonably believe he ſpoke the ſenſe of " his party as well as his own. St. Stephen's mar- " tyrdom came on preſently after, in which we " do not find the Phariſees, as ſuch, had any hand; " it is probable that he was proſecuted by thoſe who " had before impriſoned Peter and John. One " novice indeed of that ſect was ſo zealous that he " kept the cloaths of thoſe that ſtoned him. This

" novice,

" novice, whoſe zeal went beyond all bounds, was
" the great St. Paul, who was particularly honour-
" ed with a call from heaven by which he was con-
" verted, and he was afterwards, by God himſelf,
" appointed to be the Apoſtle of the Gentiles. Be-
" ſides him, and him too reclaimed in ſo glorious
" a manner, we find no one Phariſee, either na-
" med or hinted at by St. Luke, as an oppoſer of
" Chriſtianity in thoſe earlieſt days. What o-
" thers might do we know not. But we find the
" Sadducees purſuing St. Paul even to death at his
" coming to Jeruſalem, in the 21ſt of the Acts.
" He then, upon all occaſions, owned himſelf to
" be a Phariſee. In the 22d chapter he told the
" people, that he had been bred up at the feet of
" Gamaliel after the ſtricteſt manner, in the law of
" his fathers. In the 23d chapter he told the coun-
" cil that he was a Phariſee, the ſon of a Phariſee,
" and that he was accuſed for aſſerting the hope
" and reſurrection of the dead, which was their dar-
" ling doctrine. Hereupon the Phariſees ſtood by
" him, and though they did not own our Saviour
" to be the Meſſiah, yet they would not deny but
" ſome angel or ſpirit might have ſpoken to him,
" and then if they oppoſed him, they ſhould fight
" againſt God. This was the very argument Ga-
" maliel had uſed before. The reſurrection of our
" Lord, which they ſaw ſo ſtrenuouſly aſſerted by
" the apoſtles, whoſe miracles they alſo ſaw and
" owned, (Acts 4. 16.) ſeems to have ſtruck them,
" and many of them were converted. (Acts 15. 5.)
" even without a miracle, and the reſt ſtood ſtill
" and made no oppoſition.

" We ſee here what the part was which the
" Phariſees acted in this important conjuncture.
" Of the Sadducees, we meet not with one in the
" whole apoſtolic hiſtory that was converted. We
" hear

" hear of no miracles wrought to convince any of " them, though there was an eminent one wrought " to reclaim a Phariſee. St. Paul, we ſee, after " his converſion, always gloried in his having been " bred a Phariſee. He did ſo to the people of Je- " ruſalem, to the great council, to King Agrippa, " and to the Philippians. So that from hence we " may juſtly infer, that it was not their inſtitution, " which was in itſelf laudable, which our bleſſed " Saviour found fault with, but it was their hypo- " criſy, their covetouſneſs, their oppreſſion, their " overvaluing themſelves upon their zeal for the " ceremonial law, and their adding to that yoke " by their traditions, all which were not properly " eſſentials of their inſtitution that our Lord " blamed.

" But I muſt not run on. What I would ob- " ſerve, Sir, is, that Atheiſm is more dreadful, " and would be more grievous to human ſociety, " if it were inveſted with ſufficient power, than " religion under any ſhape, where its profeſſors do " at the bottom believe what they profeſs. I de- " ſpair not of a Papiſt's converſion, though I would " not willingly ly at a zealot Papiſt's mercy, (and " no Proteſtant would, if he knew what Popery " is) though he truly believes in our Saviour. But " the Free-thinker, who ſcarcely believes there is " a God, and certainly diſbelieves revelation, is a " very terrible animal. He will talk of natural " rights, and the juſt freedoms of mankind, no " longer than 'till he himſelf gets into power; and, " by the inſtance before us, we have ſmall grounds " to hope for his ſalvation, or that God will ever " vouchſafe him ſufficient grace to reclaim him " from errors, which have been ſo immediately " levelled againſt himſelf.

" If

" If theſe notions be true, as I verily believe " they are, I thought they might be worth pu- " bliſhing at this time for which reaſon they are " ſent in this manner to you by,

SIR,

Your moſt humble Servant,

M. N.

Quod ſi in hoc erro, quod animos hominum immortales eſſe credam, libenter erro: nec mihi hunc errorem, quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo: ſin mortuus (ut quidam minuti philoſophi cenſent) nihil ſentiam; non vereor, ne hunc errrorem meum mortui philoſophi irrideant. Tull.

If I am wrong, in believing that the ſouls of men are immortal; I pleaſe myſelf in my miſtake: nor, while I live, will I ever chuſe, that this opinion, wherewith I am ſo much delighted, ſhould be wreſted from me: but if, at death, I am to be annihilated, as ſome minute philoſophers imagine, I am not afraid, leſt thoſe wiſe men when extinct too, ſhould laugh at my error.

SEVERAL letters which I have lately received give me information, that ſome well diſpoſed perſons have taken offence at my uſing the word *Free-thinker* as a term of reproach. To ſet therefore this matter in a clear light, I muſt declare, that no one can have a greater veneration than myſelf for the Free-thinkers of antiquity, who acted the ſame part in thoſe times, as the great men of the reformation did in ſeveral nations of Europe, by exerting themſelves againſt the idolatry and ſuperſtition of the times in which they lived. It was by this noble impulſe that Socrates and his diſciples, as well as all the philoſophers of note in Greece, and Cicero, Seneca, with all the learned men of Rome, endeavoured to enlighten their contemporaries amidſt

midſt the darkneſs and ignorance in which the world was then ſunk and buried.

The great points which theſe Free-thinkers endeavoured to eſtabliſh and inculcate into the minds of men, were, the formation of the univerſe, the ſuperintendency of Providence, the perfection of the divine nature, the immortality of the ſoul, and the future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments. They all complied with the religion of their country, as much as poſſible, in ſuch particulars as did not contradict and pervert theſe great and fundamental doctrines of mankind. On the contrary, the perſons who now ſet up for Free-thinkers, are ſuch as endeavour by a little traſh of words and ſophiſtry, to weaken and deſtroy thoſe very principles, for the vindication of which, freedom of thought at firſt became laudable and heroic. Theſe apoſtates from reaſon and good ſenſe, can look at the glorious frame of nature, without paying an adoration to him that raiſed it; can conſider the great revolutions in the univerſe, without lifting up their minds to that ſuperior power which hath the direction of it; can preſume to cenſure the Deity in his ways towards men; can level mankind with the beaſts that periſh; can extinguiſh in their own minds all the pleaſing hopes of a future ſtate, and lull themſelves into a ſtupid ſecurity againſt the terrors of it. If one were to take the word *Prieſtcraft* out of the mouths of theſe ſhallow monſters, they would be immediately ſtruck dumb. It is by the help of this ſingle term that they endeavour to diſappoint the good works of the moſt learned and venerable order of men, and harden the hearts of the ignorant againſt the very light of nature, and the common received notions of mankind. We ought not to treat ſuch miſcreants as theſe upon the foot of fair diſputants, but to pour out contempt upon them,

them, and ſpeak of them with ſcorn and infamy, as the peſts of ſociety, the revilers of human nature, and the blaſphemers of a Being, whom a good man would rather die than hear diſhonoured. Cicero, after having mentioned the great heroes of knowledge that recommended this divine doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul, calls thoſe ſmall pretenders to wiſdom who declared againſt it, certain minute philoſophers, uſing a diminutive even of the word *little*, to expreſs the deſpicable opinion he had of them. The contempt he throws upon them in another paſſage is yet more remarkable; where, to ſhew the mean thoughts he entertains of them, he declares, he would rather be in the wrong with Plato, than in the right with ſuch company. There is indeed nothing in the world ſo ridiculous as one of theſe grave philoſophical Free-thinkers, that hath neither paſſions nor appetites to gratify, no heats of blood nor vigour of conſtitution that can turn his ſyſtems of Infidelity to his advantage, or raiſe pleaſures out of them which are inconſiſtent with the belief of an Hereafter. One that has neither wit, gallantry, mirth or youth to indulge by theſe notions, but only a poor, joyleſs, uncomfortable vanity of diſtinguiſhing himſelf from the reſt of mankind, is rather to be regarded as a miſchievous lunatic, than a miſtaken philoſopher. A chaſte Infidel, a ſpeculative Libertine, is an animal that I ſhould not believe to be in nature, did I not ſometimes meet with this ſpecies of men, that plead for the indulgence of their paſſions in the midſt of a ſevere ſtudious life, and talk againſt the immortality of the ſoul over a diſh of coffee.

I would fain aſk a minute philoſopher, what good he propoſes to mankind by the publiſhing of his doctrines? Will they make a man a better citizen,

citizen, or father of a family; a more endearing huſband, friend, or ſon? Will they enlarge his public or private virtues, or correct any of his frailties or vices? What is there either joyful or glorious in ſuch opinions? Do they either refreſh or enlarge our thoughts? Do they contribute to the happineſs, or raiſe the dignity of human nature? The only good that I have ever heard pretended to, is, that they baniſh terrors, and ſet the mind at eaſe. But whoſe terrors do they baniſh? It is certain, if there were any ſtrength in their arguments, they would give great diſturbance to minds that are influenced by virtue, honour and morality, and take from us the only comforts and ſupports of affliction, ſickneſs and old age. The minds therefore which they ſet at eaſe, are only thoſe of impenitent criminals and malefactors, and which, to the good of mankind, ſhould be in perpetual terror and alarm.

I muſt confeſs, nothing is more uſual than for a Free-thinker, in proportion as the inſolence of ſcepticiſm is abated in him by years and knowledge, or humbled or beaten down by ſorrow or ſickneſs, to reconcile himſelf to the general conceptions of reaſonable creatures; ſo that we frequently ſee the apoſtates turning from their revolt toward the end of their lives, and employing the refuſe of their parts in promoting thoſe truths which they had before endeavoured to invalidate.

The hiſtory of a Gentleman in France is very well known, who was ſo zealous a promoter of Infidelity, that he had got together a ſelect company of diſciples, and travelled into all parts of the kingdom to make converts. In the midſt of his fantaſtical ſucceſs he fell ſick, and was reclaimed to ſuch a ſenſe of his condition, that after he had paſſed ſome time in great agonies and horrors of mind,

he

he begged thoſe who had the care of burying him, to dreſs his body in the habit of a Capuchin, that the devil might not run away with it: and, to do further juſtice upon himſelf, deſired them to tie a halter about his neck, as a mark of that ignominious puniſhment, which in his own thoughts he had ſo juſtly deſerved.

I would not have perſecution ſo far diſgraced, as to wiſh theſe vermin might be animadverted on by any legal penalties; though I think it would be highly reaſonable, that thoſe few of them who die in the profeſſions of their infidelity, ſhould have ſuch tokens of infamy fixed upon them, as might diſtinguiſh thoſe bodies which are given up by the owners to oblivion and putrefaction, from thoſe which reſt in hope, and ſhall riſe in glory. But, at the ſame time that I am againſt doing them the honour of the notice of our laws, which ought not to ſuppoſe there are ſuch criminals in being, I have often wondered, how they can be tolerated in any mixed converſations, while they are venting theſe abſurd opinions; and ſhould think, that if, on any ſuch occaſions, half a dozen of the moſt robuſt Chriſtians in the company would lead one of theſe Gentlemen to a pump, or convey him into a blanket, they would do very good ſervice both to church and ſtate. I do not know how the law ſtands in this particular; but I hope, whatever knocks, bangs or thumps, might be given with ſuch an honeſt intention, would not be conſtrued as a breach of the peace. I dare ſay, they would not be returned by the perſon who receives them; for whatever theſe fools may ſay in the vanity of their hearts, they are too wiſe to riſque their lives upon the uncertainty of their opinions.

When I was a young man about this town, I frequented the ordinary of the Black Horſe in Hol-

burn, where the perſon that uſually preſided at the table was a rough old-faſhioned Gentleman, who, according to the cuſtoms of thoſe times, had been the Major and Preacher of a regiment. It happened one day that a noiſy young officer, bred in France, was venting ſome new-fangled notions, and ſpeaking, in the gaiety of his humour, againſt the diſpenſations of Providence. The Major at firſt only deſired him to talk more reſpectfully of one for whom all the company had an honour; but finding him run on in his extravagance, began to reprimand him after a more ſerious manner. Young man! ſaid he, do not abuſe your benefactor, whilſt you are eating his bread. Conſider whoſe air you breathe, whoſe preſence you are in, and who it is that gave you the power of that very ſpeech which you make uſe of to his diſhonour. The young fellow, who thought to turn matters into a jeſt, aſked him, if he was going to preach? But, at the ſame time, deſired him to take care what he ſaid, when he ſpoke to a man of honour. A man of honour! ſays the Major; thou art an Infidel and a blaſphemer, and I ſhall uſe thee as ſuch. In ſhort, the quarrel ran ſo high, that the Major was deſired to walk out. Upon their coming into the garden, the old fellow adviſed his antagoniſt to conſider the place into which one paſs might drive him; but finding him grow upon him to a degree of ſcurrility, as believing the advice proceeded from fear; Sirrah, ſays he, if a thunderbolt does not ſtrike thee dead before I come at thee, I ſhall not fail to chaſtiſe thee for thy profaneneſs to thy Maker, and thy ſaucineſs to his ſervant. Upon this he drew his ſword, and cried out with a loud voice, "The ſword of the Lord and of Gi-"deon:" which ſo terrified his antagoniſt, that he was immediately diſarmed, and thrown upon his

his knees. In this poſture he begged his life; but the Major refuſed to grant it, before he had aſked pardon for his offence in a ſhort extemporary prayer, which the old Gentleman dictated to him upon the ſpot, and which his proſelyte repeated after him, in the preſence of the whole ordinary, that were now gathered about him in the garden.

SECTION X.

IMMORTALITY *of the Soul, and a* FUTURE STATE.

———*Inter ſilvas academi quaerere verum.*
Hor. lib. II. epiſt. II. v. 45.

To ſearch out truth in academic groves.

THE courſe of my laſt ſpeculation † led me inſenſibly into a ſubject upon which I always meditate with great delight, I mean the immortality of the ſoul. I was yeſterday walking alone in one of my friend's woods, and loſt myſelf in it very agreeably, as I was running over in my mind the ſeveral arguments that eſtabliſh this great point, which is the baſis of morality, and the ſource of all the pleaſing hopes and ſecret joys that can ariſe in the heart of a reaſonable creature. I conſidered thoſe ſeveral proofs drawn,

Firſt, From the nature of the ſoul itſelf, and particularly its immateriality; which, though not abſolutely neceſſary to the eternity of its duration, has, I think, been evinced to almoſt a demonſtration.

Secondly, From its paſſions and ſentiments, as particularly from its love of exiſtence, its horror of

† *See* Spectator, Vol. II. No 111.

annihilation, and its hopes of immortality, with that ſecret ſatisfaction which it finds in the practice of virtue, and that uneaſineſs which follows in it upon the commiſſion of vice.

Thirdly, From the nature of the ſupreme Being, whoſe juſtice, goodneſs, wiſdom and veracity, are all concerned in this great point.

But among theſe and other excellent arguments for the immortality of the ſoul, there is one drawn from the perpetual progreſs of the ſoul to its perfection, without a poſſibility of ever arriving at it; which is a hint that I do not remember to have ſeen opened and improved by others who have written on this ſubject, though it ſeems to me to carry a great weight with it. How can it enter into the thoughts of man, that the ſoul, which is capable of ſuch immenſe perfections, and of receiving new improvements to all eternity, ſhall fall away into nothing almoſt as ſoon as it is created? Are ſuch abilities made for no purpoſe? A brute arrives at a point of perfection that he can never paſs: in a few years he has all the enduements he is capable of; and were he to live ten thouſand more, would be the ſame thing he is at preſent. Were a human ſoul thus at a ſtand in her accompliſhments, were her faculties to be full-blown, and incapable of farther enlargements, I could imagine it might fall away inſenſibly, and drop at once into a ſtate of annihilation. But can we believe a thinking being, that is in a perpetual progreſs of improvements, and travelling on from perfection to perfection, after having juſt looked abroad into the works of its Creator, and made a few diſcoveries of his infinite goodneſs, wiſdom, and power, muſt periſh at her firſt ſetting out, and in the very beginning of her inquiries?

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A man conſidered in his preſent ſtate, ſeems only ſent into the world to propagate his kind. He provides himſelf with a ſucceſſor, and immediately quits his poſt to make room for him.

——————————————————*Haeres*
Haeredem alterius, velut unda ſupervenit undam.
Hor. lib. II. epiſt. 2. v. 175.

Heir urges on his predeceſſor heir,
Like wave impelling wave.——————

He does not ſeem born to enjoy life, but to deliver it down to others. This is not ſurpriſing to conſider in animals, which are formed for our uſe, and can finiſh their buſineſs in a ſhort life. The ſilk-worm, after having ſpun her taſk, lays her eggs and dies. But a man can never have taken in his full meaſure of knowledge, has not time to ſubdue his paſſions, eſtabliſh his ſoul in virtue, and come up to the perfection of his nature, before he is hurried off the ſtage. Would an infinitely wiſe Being make ſuch glorious creatures for ſo mean a purpoſe? Can he delight in the production of ſuch abortive intelligences, ſuch ſhort-lived reaſonable beings? Would he give us talents that are not to be exerted? Capacities that are never to be gratified? How can we find that wiſdom, which ſhines through all his works, in the formation of man, without looking on this world as only a nurſery for the next, and believing that the ſeveral generations of rational creatures, which riſe up and diſappear in ſuch quick ſucceſſions, are only to receive their firſt rudiments of exiſtence here, and afterwards to be tranſplanted into a more friendly climate, where they may ſpread and flouriſh to all eternity?

There is not, in my opinion, a more pleaſing and triumphant conſideration in religion than this, of the perpetual progreſs which the ſoul makes towards the perfection of its nature, without ever arriving at a period in it. To look upon the ſoul as going on from ſtrength to ſtrength, to conſider that ſhe is to ſhine for ever with new acceſſions of glory, and brighten to all eternity; that ſhe will be ſtill adding virtue to virtue, and knowledge to knowledge; carries in it ſomething wonderfully agreeable to that ambition which is natural to the mind of man. Nay, it muſt be a proſpect pleaſing to God himſelf, to ſee his creation for ever beautifying in his eyes, and drawing nearer to him, by greater degrees of reſemblance.

Methinks this ſingle conſideration, of the progreſs of a finite ſpirit to perfection, will be ſufficient to extinguiſh all envy in inferior natures, and all contempt in ſuperior. That cherubim, which now appears as a God to a human ſoul, knows very well, that the period will come about in eternity, when the human ſoul ſhall be as perfect as he himſelf now is: nay, when ſhe ſhall look down upon that degree of perfection, as much as ſhe now falls ſhort of it. It is true, the higher nature ſtill advances, and by that means preſerves his diſtance and ſuperiority in the ſcale of being; but he knows, how high ſoever the ſtation is, of which he ſtands poſſeſſed at preſent, the inferior nature will at length mount up to it, and ſhine forth in the ſame degree of glory.

With what aſtoniſhment and veneration may we look into our own ſouls, where there are ſuch hidden ſtores of virtue and knowledge, ſuch inexhauſted ſources of perfection! We know not yet what we ſhall be, nor will it ever enter into the heart of man to conceive the glory that will be always in

in reſerve for him. The ſoul conſidered with its Creator, is like one of thoſe mathematical lines that may draw nearer to another for all eternity, without a poſſibility of touching it: And can there be a thought ſo tranſporting, as to conſider ourſelves in theſe perpetual approaches to him, who is not only the ſtandard of perfection, but of happineſs! *

Neſcio quomodo inhaeret in mentibus quaſi ſeculorum quoddam augurium futurorum; idque in maximis ingeniis altiſſimiſque animis exiſtit maximè et apparet facillimè.

Cic. Tuſc. Quæſt.

There is, I know not how, deeply imprinted in the minds of men, a certain preſage, as it were, of a future exiſtence: and this takes the deepeſt root, and is moſt diſcoverable in the greateſt genius's, and moſt elevated minds.

To the SPECTATOR.

SIR,

"I AM fully perſuaded, that one of the beſt "ſprings of generous and worthy actions, is "the having generous and worthy thoughts of our-"ſelves. Whoever has a mean opinion of the "dignity of his nature, will act in no higher a "rank than he has allotted himſelf in his own eſti-"mation. If he conſiders his being as circum-"ſcribed by the uncertain term of a few years, his "deſigns will be contracted into the ſame narrow "ſpan he imagines is to bound his exiſtence. How "can he exalt his thoughts to any thing great and "noble, who only believes, that, after a ſhort turn "on the ſtage of this world, he is to ſink into o-"blivion, and to loſe his conſciouſneſs for ever?

"For this reaſon I am of opinion, that ſo uſe-"ful and elevated a contemplation as that of the "ſoul's immortality cannot be reſumed too often.

"There

"There is not a more improving exerciſe to the "human mind, than to be frequently reviving its "own great privileges and endowments; nor a "more effectual means to awaken in us an ambi- "tion raiſed above low objects and little purſuits, "than to value ourſelves as heirs of eternity.

"It is a very great ſatisfacton to conſider the "beſt and wiſeſt of mankind, in all nations and "ages, aſſerting, as with one voice, this their birth- "right, and to find it ratified by an expreſs revela- "tion. At the ſame time, if we turn our thoughts "inward upon ourſelves, we may meet with a "kind of ſecret ſenſe concurring with the proofs of "our own immortality.

"You have, in my opinion, raiſed a good pre- "ſumptive argument from the increaſing appetite "the mind has to knowledge, and to the extend- "ing its own faculties, which cannot be accom- "pliſhed, as the more reſtrained perfection of lower "creatures may, in the limits of a ſhort life. I "think another probable conjecture may be raiſed "from our appetite to duration itſelf, and from a "reflexion on our progreſs through the ſeveral ſta- "ges of it: we are complaining, as you obſerve in "a former ſpeculation, of the ſhortneſs of life, and "yet are perpetually hurrying over the parts of it "to arrive at certain little ſettlements, or imagina- "ry points of reſt, which are diſperſed up and down "in it.

"Now let us conſider what happens to us, when "we arrive at theſe imaginary points of reſt: "Do we ſtop our motion, and ſit down ſatisfied "in the ſettlement we have gained? or are we not "removing the boundary, and marking out new "points of reſt, to which we preſs forward with "the like eagerneſs, and which ceaſe to be ſuch as "faſt as we attain them? Our caſe is like that of

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" a traveller upon the Alps, who ſhould fancy that " the top of the next hill muſt end his journey, " becauſe it terminates his proſpect; but he no " ſooner arrives at it, than he ſees new ground and " other hills beyond it, and continues to travel on " as before.

" This is ſo plainly every man's condition in " life, that there is no one who has obſerved any " thing, but may obſerve, that as faſt as his time " wears away, his appetite to ſomething future re- " mains. The uſe therefore I would make of it, " is this; That, ſince nature (as ſome love to ex- " preſs it) does nothing in vain, or to ſpeak pro- " perly, ſince the Author of our being has planted " no wandering paſſion in it, no deſire which has " not its object, futurity is the proper object of the " paſſion ſo conſtantly exerciſed about it; and this " reſtleſſneſs in the preſent, this aſſigning ourſelves " over to farther ſtages of duration, this ſucceſſive " graſping at ſomewhat ſtill to come, appears to " me (whatever it may to others) as a kind of in- " ſtinct or natural ſymptom which the mind of man " has of its own immortality.

" I take it at the ſame time for granted, that the " immortality of the ſoul is ſufficiently eſtabliſh- " ed by other arguments: and if ſo, this appetite, " which otherwiſe would be very unaccountable " and abſurd, ſeems very reaſonable, and adds " ſtrength to the concluſion. But I am amazed, " when I conſider there are creatures capable of " thought, who, in ſpite of every argument, can " form to themſelves a ſullen ſatisfaction in think- " ing otherwiſe. There is ſomething ſo pitifully " mean in the inverted ambition of that man who " can hope for annihilation, and pleaſe himſelf to " think, that his whole fabric ſhall one day crumble " into duſt, and mix with the maſs of inanimate

" beings,

" beings, that it equally deſerves our admiration
" and pity. The myſtery of ſuch mens unbelief is
" not hard to be penetrated; and indeed amounts
" to nothing more than a ſordid hope that they ſhall
" not be immortal, becauſe they dare not be ſo.

" This brings me back to my firſt obſervation,
" and gives me occaſion to ſay further, that as
" worthy actions ſpring from worthy thoughts, ſo
" worthy thoughts are likewiſe the conſequence of
" worthy actions: But the wretch who has degra-
" ded himſelf below the character of immortality,
" is very willing to reſign his pretenſions to it, and
" to ſubſtitute, in its room, a dark negative happi-
" neſs in the extinction of his being.

" The admirable Shakeſpear has given us a very
" ſtrong image of the unſupported condition of
" ſuch a perſon in his laſt minutes, in the ſecond
" part of King Henry VI. where Cardinal Beau-
" fort, who had been concerned in the murder of
" the good Duke Humphrey, is repreſented on his
" death-bed. After ſome ſhort confuſed ſpeeches
" which ſhew an imagination diſturbed with guilt,
" juſt as he is expiring, King Henry ſtanding by
" him, full of compaſſion, ſays,

Lord Cardinal! if thou thinkeſt on heaven's bliſs,
Hold up thy hand, make ſignal of that hope!
He dies, and makes no ſign!——

" The deſpair which is here ſhewn, without a
" word or action on the part of the dying perſon,
" is beyond what could be painted by the moſt for-
" cible expreſſions whatever.

" I ſhall not purſue this thought further, but
" only add, that as annihilation is not to be had
" with a wiſh, ſo it is the moſt abject thing in the
" world to wiſh it. What are honour, fame,
" wealth, or power, when compared with the ge-

" nerous

"nerous expectation of a being without end, and a "happineſs adequate to that being?" *I am*,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient,
humble Servant,

Z T. D.

Ἐν ἐλπίσιν χρὴ τὰς σοφὰς ἔχειν βίον. Euripid.

To live in joyful hope becomes the wiſe.

THE time preſent ſeldom affords ſufficient employment to the mind of man. Objects of pain or pleaſure, love or admiration, do not ly thick enough together in life to keep the ſoul in conſtant action, and ſupply an immediate exerciſe to its faculties. In order, therefore, to remedy this defect, that the mind may not want buſineſs, but always have materials for thinking, ſhe is endued with certain powers, that can recal what is paſſed, and anticipate what is to come.

That wonderful faculty, which we call the memory, is perpetually looking back, when we have nothing preſent to entertain us. It is like thoſe repoſitories in ſeveral animals, that are filled with ſtores of their former food, on which they may ruminate when their preſent paſture fails.

As the memory relieves the mind in her vacant moments, and prevents any chaſms of thought by ideas of what is paſt, we have other faculties that agitate and employ her upon what is to come. Theſe are the paſſions of *hope* and *fear*.

By theſe two paſſions we reach forward into futurity, and bring up to our preſent thoughts objects that ly hid in the remoteſt depths of time. We ſuffer miſery,

miſery, and enjoy happineſs, before they are in being; we can ſet the ſun and ſtars forward, or loſe ſight of them by wandering into thoſe retired parts of eternity, when the heavens and earth ſhall be no more.

By the way; who can imagine that the exiſtence of a creature is to be circumſcribed by time, whoſe thoughts are not? But I ſhall, in this paper, confine myſelf to that particular paſſion which goes by the name of *hope*.

Our actual enjoyments are ſo few and tranſient, that man would be a very miſerable being, were he not endued with this paſſion, which gives him a taſte of thoſe good things that may poſſibly come into his poſſeſſion. "We ſhould hope for every "thing that is good, ſays the old poet Linus, be"cauſe there is nothing which may not be hoped "for, and nothing but what the gods are able to "give us." Hope quickens all the ſtill parts of life, and keeps the mind awake in her moſt remiſs and indolent hours. It gives habitual ſerenity and good humour. It is a kind of vital heat in the ſoul, that cheers and gladdens her, when ſhe does not attend to it. It makes pain eaſy, and labour pleaſant.

Beſide theſe ſeveral advantages which riſe from hope, there is another which is none of the leaſt, and that is, its great efficacy in preſerving us from ſetting too high a value on preſent enjoyments. The ſaying of Cæſar is very well known. When he had given away all his eſtate in gratuities among his friends, one of them aſked, what he had left for himſelf? to which that great man replied, Hope. His natural magnanimity hindered him from prizing what he was certainly poſſeſſed of, and turned all his thoughts upon ſomething more valuable that he had in view. I queſtion not but every reader will draw

a

a moral from this ſtory, and apply it to himſelf without my direction.

The old ſtory of Pandora's box (which many of the learned believe was formed among the Heathens upon the tradition of the fall of man) ſhews us how deplorable a ſtate they thought the preſent life, without hope: To ſet forth the utmoſt condition of miſery, they tell us, that our forefather, according to the Pagan theology, had a great veſſel preſented him by Pandora: Upon his lifting up the lid of it, ſays the fable, there flew out all the calamities and diſtempers incident to men, from which, 'till that time, they had been altogether exempt. Hope, who had been incloſed in the cup with ſo much bad company, inſtead of flying off with the reſt, ſtuck ſo cloſe to the lid of it, that it was ſhut down upon her.

I ſhall make but two reflexions upon what I have hitherto ſaid. Firſt, that no kind of life is ſo happy as that which is full of hope, eſpecially when the hope is well grounded, and when the object of it is of an exalted kind, and in its nature proper to make the perſon happy who enjoys it. This propoſition muſt be very evident to thoſe who conſider how few are the preſent enjoyments of the moſt happy man, and how inſufficient to give him an entire ſatisfaction and acquieſcence in them.

My next obſervation is this, that a religious life is that which moſt abounds in a well-grounded hope, and ſuch an one as is fixed on objects that are capable of making us entirely happy. This Hope in a religious man, is much more ſure and certain than the hope of any temporal bleſſing, as it is ſtrengthned not only by reaſon, but by faith. It has at the ſame time its eye perpetually fixed on that ſtate, which implies, in the very notion of it, the moſt full and the moſt compleat happineſs.

I have before ſhewn how the influence of hope in general ſweetens life, and makes our preſent condition ſupportable, if not pleaſing; but a religious hope has ſtill greater advantages. It does not only bear up the mind under her ſufferings, but makes her rejoice in them, as they may be the inſtruments of procuring her the great and ultimate end of all her hope.

Religious hope has likewiſe this advantage above any other kind of hope, that it is able to revive the dying man, and to fill his mind not only with ſecret comfort and refreſhment, but ſometimes with rapture and tranſport. He triumphs in his agonies, whilſt the ſoul ſprings forward with delight to the great object which ſhe has always had in view, and leaves the body with an expectation of being re-united to her in a glorious and joyful reſurrection.

I ſhall conclude this eſſay with thoſe emphatical expreſſions of a lively hope, which the Pſalmiſt made uſe of in the midſt of thoſe dangers and adverſities which ſurrounded him; for the following paſſage had its preſent and perſonal, as well as its future and prophetic ſenſe. "I have ſet the Lord "always before me: becauſe he is at my right "hand I ſhall not be moved. Therefore my heart "is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my fleſh alſo "ſhall reſt in hope. For thou wilt not leave my "ſoul in hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy "one to ſee corruption. Thou wilt ſhew me the "path of life: in thy preſence is fulneſs of joy, "at thy right hand there are pleaſures for ever-"more."

Τῦ μὶν γὰρ γένος ἐσμέν———

For we are his offspring, Acts xvii. 28.

To the SPECTATOR.

SIR,

" IT has been uſual to remind perſons of rank, " on great occaſions in life, of their race and " quality, and to what expectations they were " born; that, by conſidering what is worthy of " them, they may be withdrawn from mean pur- " ſuits, and encouraged to laudable undertakings. " This is turning nobility into a principle of vir- " tue, and making it productive of merit, as it " is underſtood to have been originally a reward " of it.

" It is for the like reaſon, I imagine, that you " have in ſome of your ſpeculations, aſſerted to " your readers the dignity of human nature. But " you cannot be inſenſible that this is a contro- " verted doctrine; there are authors who conſider " human nature in a very different view, and " books of maxims have been written to ſhew the " falſity of all human virtues. The reflexions " which are made on this ſubject uſually take ſome " tincture from the tempers and characters of thoſe " that make them. Politicians can reſolve the " moſt ſhining actions among men into artifice " and deſign; others, who are ſoured by diſcon- " tent, repulſes, or ill uſage, are apt to miſtake " their ſpleen for philoſophy; men of profligate " lives, and ſuch as find themſelves incapable of " riſing to any diſtinction among their fellow-crea- " tures, are for pulling down all appearances of " merit, which ſeem to upbraid them: And Sati-

" riſts deſcribe nothing but deformity. From all " theſe hands we have ſuch draughts of mankind " as are repreſented in thoſe burleſque pictures, " which the Italians call Caracaturas; where the " art conſiſts in preſerving, amidſt diſtorted pro- " portions and aggravated features, ſome diſtin- " guiſhing likeneſs of the perſon, but in ſuch " a manner as to transform the moſt agreeable " beauty into the moſt odious monſter.

" It is very diſingenuous to level the beſt of " mankind with the worſt, and for the faults of " particulars to degrade the whole ſpecies. Such " methods tend not only to remove a man's good " opinion of others, but to deſtroy that reverence " for himſelf, which is a great guard of innocence, " and a ſpring of virtue.

" It is true indeed, that there are ſurpriſing mix- " tures of beauty and deformity, of wiſdom and " folly, virtue and vice in the human make; ſuch " a diſparity is found among numbers of the ſame " kind: and every individual, in ſome inſtances, " or at ſome times, is ſo unequal to himſelf, that " man ſeems to be the moſt wavering and incon- " ſiſtent being in the whole creation. So that the " queſtion in morality, concerning the dignity of " our nature, may at firſt ſight appear like ſome " difficult queſtions in Natural Philoſophy, in which " the arguments on both ſides ſeem to be of equal " ſtrength. But as I began with conſidering this " point, as it relates to action, I ſhall here bor- " row an admirable reflexion from Monſieur " Paſcal, which I think ſets it in its proper " light.

" It is of dangerous conſequence, ſays he, to " repreſent to man how near he is to the level " of beaſts, without ſhewing him at the ſame time " his greatneſs. It is likewiſe dangerous to let him

" ſee

" ſee his greatneſs without his meanneſs. It is " more dangerous yet to leave him ignorant of " either; but very beneficial that he ſhould be " made ſenſible of both." 'Whatever imper-' fections we may have in our nature, it is the bu-' ſineſs of religion and virtue to rectify them, as ' far as is conſiſtent with our preſent ſtate. In the ' mean time, it is no ſmall encouragement to ge-' nerous minds to conſider that we ſhall put them ' all off with our mortality. That ſublime man-' ner of ſalutation with which the Jews approach-' ed their kings,

'*O King, live for ever!*

' may be addreſſed to the loweſt and moſt de-' ſpiſed mortal among us, under all the infirmi-' ties and diſtreſſes with which we ſee him ſur-' rounded. And whoever believes the immortali-' ty of the ſoul, will not need a better argument ' for the dignity of his nature, nor a ſtronger in-' citement to actions ſuitable to it.

'I am naturally led by this reflexion to a ſubject ' I have already touched upon in a former letter, ' and cannot without pleaſure call to mind the ' thoughts of Cicero to this purpoſe, in the cloſe ' of his book concerning old age. Every one ' who is acquainted with his writings will remem-' ber, that the elder Cato is introduced in that diſ-' courſe as the ſpeaker, and Scipio and Lelius as his ' auditors. This venerable perſon is repreſented ' looking forward as it were from the verge of ex-' treme old age, into a future ſtate, and riſing in-' to a contemplation on the unperiſhable part of his ' nature, and its exiſtence after death. I ſhall ' collect part of his diſcourſe: and, as you have ' formerly offered ſome arguments for the ſoul's

" immortality, agreeable both to reaſon and the " Chriſtian doctrine, I believe your readers will not " be diſpleaſed to ſee how the ſame great truth " ſhines in the pomp of Roman eloquence.

" This, ſays Cato, is my firm perſuaſion, that " ſince the human ſoul exerts itſelf with ſo great " activity, ſince it has ſuch a remembrance of " the paſt, ſuch a concern for the future, ſince " it is enriched with ſo many arts, ſciences, and " diſcoveries, it is impoſſible but the being which " contains all theſe muſt be immortal.

" The elder Cyrus, juſt before his death, is " repreſented by Xenophon ſpeaking after this " manner. " Think not, my deareſt children, " that when I depart from you, I ſhall be no more, " but remember, that my ſoul, even while I " lived among you, was inviſible to you; yet " by my actions you were ſenſible it exiſted in " this body. Believe it therefore exiſting ſtill, " though it be ſtill unſeen. How quickly would " the honours of illuſtrious men periſh after death, " if their ſouls performed nothing to preſerve their " fame? For my own part, I could never think " that the ſoul, while in a mortal body, lives; " but when departed out of it, dies; or that its " conſciouſneſs is loſt when it is diſcharged out of " an unconſcious habitation. But when it is " freed from all corporeal alliance, then it truly " exiſts. Further, ſince the human frame is bro- " ken by death, tell us what becomes of its parts? " It is viſible whether the materials of other be- " ings are tranſlated, namely, to the ſource from " whence they had their birth. The ſoul alone, " neither preſent nor departed, is the object of our " eyes."

" Thus Cyrus. But to proceed. No one ſhall " perſuade me, Scipio, that your worthy father,

" or

" or your grandfathers Paulus and Africanus, or
" Africanus his father, or uncle or many other
" excellent men whom I need not name, perform-
" ed ſo many actions to be remembered by po-
" ſterity, without being ſenſible that futurity was
" their right. And, if I may be allowed an old
" man's privilege, to ſpeak of myſelf, do you
" think I would have endured the fatigue of ſo
" many wearisome days and nights both at home
" and abroad, if I imagined that the ſame boundary
" which is ſet to my life muſt terminate my glo-
" ry? Were it not more deſirable to have worn
" out my days in eaſe and tranquillity, free from
" labour, and without emulation? But I know
" not how, my ſoul has always raiſed itſelf, and
" looked forward on futurity, in this view and
" expectation, that when it ſhall depart out of
" life, it ſhall then live for ever; and if this were
" not true, that the mind is immortal, the ſouls
" of the moſt worthy would not, above all o-
" thers, have the ſtrongeſt impulſe to glory.

" What beſides this is the cauſe that the wiſeſt
" men die with the greateſt equanimity, the
" ignorant with the greateſt concern? Does it
" not ſeem, that thoſe minds which have the moſt
" extenſive views, foreſee they are removing to
" a happier condition, which thoſe of a narrower
" ſight do not perceive? I, for my part, am
" tranſported with the hope of ſeeing your an-
" ceſtors, whom I have honoured and loved,
" and am earneſtly deſirous of meeting not only
" thoſe excellent perſons whom I have known, but
" thoſe too of whom I have heard and read, and
" of whom I myſelf have written; nor would I
" be detained from ſo pleaſing a journey. O hap-
" py day! when I ſhall eſcape from this croud,
" this heap of pollution, and be admitted to that
" divine

" divine aſſembly of exalted ſpirits! when I ſhall " go not only to thoſe great perſons I have named, " but to my Cato, my ſon, than whom a better " man was never born, and whoſe funeral rites " I myſelf performed, whereas he ought rather to " have attended mine. Yet has not his ſoul de- " ſerted me, but ſeeming to caſt back a look on " me, is gone before to thoſe habitations to which " it was ſenſible I ſhould follow him. And though " I might appear to have borne my loſs with cou- " rage, I was not unaffected with it, but I com- " forted myſelf in the aſſurance that it would not " be long before we ſhould meet again, and be " divorced no more."

I am, SIR, *&c.*

———*Nec morti eſſe locum*—— Virg. Georg. IV. v. 226.

No room is left for death. DRYDEN.

A Lewd young fellow ſeeing an aged hermit go by him bare-foot, " Father, ſays he, you are " in a very miſerable condition, if there is not " another world. True, ſon, ſaid the hermit: " but what is thy condition if there is?" Man is a creature deſigned for two different ſtates of being, or rather for two different lives. His firſt life is ſhort and tranſient; his ſecond permanent and laſting. The queſtion we are all concerned in, is this, In which of theſe two lives it is our chief intereſt to make ourſelves happy? Or, in other words, Whether we ſhould endeavour to ſecure to ourſelves the pleaſures and gratifications of a life which is uncertain and precarious, and at its utmoſt length, of a very inconſiderable duration; or to ſecure to ourſelves the pleaſures of a life which is fixed and ſettled, and will never end? Every man,

man, upon the firſt hearing of this queſtion, knows very well which ſide of it he ought to cloſe with. But however right we are in theory, it is plain, that in practice we adhere to the wrong ſide of the queſtion. We make proviſions for this life as though it were never to have an end, and for the other life as though it were never to have a beginning.

Should a ſpirit of ſuperior rank, who is a ſtranger to human nature, accidentally alight upon the earth, and take a ſurvey of its inhabitants; what would his notions of us be? Would not he think that we are a ſpecies of beings made for quite different ends and purpoſes than what we really are? Muſt not he imagine that we were placed in this world to get riches and honours? Would not he think that it was our duty to toil after wealth, and ſtation, and title? Nay, would not he believe we were forbidden poverty by threats of eternal puniſhment, and enjoined to purſue our pleaſures under pain of damnation? He would certainly imagine that we were influenced by a ſcheme of duties quite oppoſite to thoſe which are indeed preſcribed to us. And truly, according to ſuch an imagination, he muſt conclude that we are a ſpecies of the moſt obedient creatures in the univerſe; that we are conſtant to our duty; and that we keep a ſteddy eye on the end for which we were ſent hither.

But how great would be his aſtoniſhment, when he learned that we were beings not deſigned to exiſt in this world above threeſcore and ten years? and that the greateſt part of this buſy ſpecies fall ſhort even of that age? How would he be loſt in horror and admiration, when he ſhould know that this ſet of creatures, who lay out all their endeavours for this life, which ſcarce deſerves

the

the name of exiſtence, when, I ſay, he ſhould know that this ſet of creatures are to exiſt to all eternity in another life, for which they make no preparations? Nothing can be a greater diſgrace to reaſon, than that men, who are perſuaded of theſe two different ſtates of being, ſhould be perpetually employed in providing for a life of threeſcore and ten years, and neglecting to make proviſion for that, which after many myriads of years will be ſtill new, and ſtill beginning; eſpecially when we conſider that our endeavours for making ourſelves great, or rich, or honourable, or whatever elſe we place our happineſs in, may after all prove unſucceſsful; whereas, if we conſtantly and ſincerely endeavour to make ourſelves happy in the other life, we are ſure that our endeavours will ſucceed, and that we ſhall not be diſappointed of our hope.

The following queſtion is ſtarted by one of the ſchoolmen. Suppoſing the whole body of the earth were a great ball or maſs of the fineſt ſand, and that a ſingle grain or particle of this ſand ſhould be annihilated every thouſand years. Suppoſing then that you had it in your choice to be happy all the while this prodigious maſs of ſand was conſuming by this ſlow method till there was not a grain of it left, on condition you were to be miſerable for ever after; or ſuppoſing that you might be happy for ever after, on condition you would be miſerable till the whole maſs of ſand were thus annihilated at the rate of one ſand in a thouſand years: which of theſe two caſes would you make your choice?

It muſt be confeſſed in this caſe, ſo many thouſands of years are to the imagination as a kind of eternity, though in reality they do not bear ſo great a proportion to that duration which is to follow

low them, as an unit does to the greateſt number which you can put together in figures, or as one of thoſe ſands to the ſuppoſed heap. Reaſon therefore tells us, without any manner of heſitation, which would be the better part in this choice. However, as I have before intimated, our reaſon might in ſuch caſe be ſo overſet by the imagination, as to diſpoſe ſome perſons to ſink under the conſideration of the great length of the firſt part of this duration, and of the great diſtance of that ſecond duration which is to ſucceed it. The mind, I ſay, might give itſelf up to that happineſs which is at hand, conſidering that it is ſo very near, and that it would laſt ſo very long. But when the choice we actually have before us, is this, Whether we will chuſe to be happy for the ſpace only of threeſcore and ten, nay, perhaps of only twenty or ten years, I might ſay of only a day or an hour, and miſerable to all eternity; or, on the contrary, miſerable for this ſhort term of years, and happy for a whole eternity: what words are ſufficient to expreſs that folly and want of conſideration, which in ſuch a caſe makes a wrong choice?

I here put the caſe even at the worſt, by ſuppoſing, what ſeldom happens, that a courſe of virtue makes us miſerable in this life: but if we ſuppoſe, as it generally happens, that virtue would make us more happy even in this life than a contrary courſe of vice; how can we ſufficiently admire the the ſtupidity or madneſs of thoſe perſons who are capable of making ſo abſurd a choice?

Every wiſe man therefore will conſider this life only as it may conduce to the happineſs of the other, and cheerfully ſacrifice the pleaſures of a few years to thoſe of an eternity.

Sentio

Sentio te ſedem hominum ac domum contemplari, quae ſi tibi parva (ut eſt) ita videtur, haec ecceleſtia ſemper ſpectato; illa humana contemnito.

Cicero Somn. Scip.

I underſtand, you contemplate the abode and habitation of men; which if it ſeem ſo ſmall to you, as indeed it is, direct your views continually to heavenly objects, and contemn thoſe that are earthly.

THE following eſſay comes from the ingenious author of the letter upon novelty, printed in a late Spectator; the notions are drawn from the Platonic way of thinking, but as they contribute to raiſe the mind, and may inſpire noble ſentiments of our own future grandeur and happineſs, I think it well deſerves to be preſented to the publick.

IF the univerſe be the creature of an intelligent mind, this mind could have no immediate regard to himſelf in producing it. He needed not to make trial of his omnipotence, to be informed what effects were within its reach: the world, as exiſting in his eternal idea, was then as beautiful as now it is drawn forth into being; and in the immenſe abyſs of his eſſence are contained far brighter ſcenes than will be ever ſet forth to view; it being impoſſible that the great author of nature ſhould bound his own power by giving exiſtence to a ſyſtem of creatures ſo perfect, that he cannot improve upon it by any other exertions of his almighty will. Between finite and infinite there is an unmeaſured interval, not to be filled up in endleſs ages; for which reaſon the moſt excellent of all God's works muſt be equally ſhort of what his power is able to produce as the moſt imperfect, and may be exceeded with the ſame eaſe.

This

This thought hath made ſome imagine, (what, it muſt be confeſſed, is not impoſſible), that the unfathomed ſpace is ever teeming with new births, the younger ſtill inheriting a greater perfection than the elder. But, as this doth not fall within my preſent view, I ſhall content myſelf with taking notice, that the conſideration now mentioned proves undeniably, that the ideal worlds in the divine underſtanding yield a proſpect incomparably more ample, various and delightful than any created world can do: and that therefore, as it is not to be ſuppoſed that God ſhould make a world merely of inanimate matter, however diverſified; or inhabited only by creatures of no higher an order than brutes; ſo the end for which he deſigned his reaſonable off-ſpring, is the contemplation of his works, the enjoyment of himſelf, and in both to be happy, having, to this purpoſe, endued them with correſpondent faculties and deſires. He can have no greater pleaſure from a bare review of his works, than from the ſurvey of his own ideas, but we may be aſſured that he is well pleaſed in the ſatisfaction derived to beings capable of it, and, for whoſe entertainment, he hath erected this immenſe theatre. Is not this more than an intimation of our immortality? Man, who when conſidered as on his probation for a happy exiſtence hereafter, is the moſt remarkable inſtance of divine wiſdom; if we cut him off from all relation to eternity, is the moſt wonderful and unaccountable compoſition in the whole creation. He hath capacities to lodge a much greater variety of knowledge than he will be ever maſter of, and an unſatisfied curioſity to tread the ſecret paths of nature and providence: but, with this, his organs, in their preſent ſtructure, are rather fitted to ſerve the neceſſities of a vile body, than to miniſter to his

underſtanding; and, from the little ſpot to which he is chained, he can frame but wandering gueſſes concerning the innumerable worlds of light that encompaſs him, which, though in themſelves of a prodigious bigneſs, do but juſt glimmer in the remote ſpaces of the heavens; and when, with a great deal of time and pains, he hath laboured a little way up the ſteep aſcent of truth, and beholds with pity the groveling multitude beneath, in a moment, his foot ſlides, and he tumbles down headlong into the grave.

Thinking on this, I am obliged to believe, in juſtice to the Creator of the world, that there is another ſtate when man ſhall be better ſituated for contemplation, or rather have it in his power to remove from object to object, and from world to world; and be accommodated with ſenſes, and other helps, for making the quickeſt and moſt amazing diſcoveries. How does ſuch a genius as Sir Iſaac Newton, from amidſt the darkneſs that involves human underſtanding, break forth, and appear like one of another ſpecies! The vaſt machine, we inhabit, lies open to him, he ſeems not unacquainted with the general laws that govern it; and while with the tranſport of a philoſopher he beholds and admires the glorious work, he is capable of paying at once a more devout and more rational homage to his Maker. But alas! how narrow is the proſpect even of ſuch a mind? and how obſcure to the compaſs that is taken in by the ken of an angel; or of a ſoul but newly eſcaped from its impriſonment in the body! For my part, I freely indulge my ſoul in the confidence of its future grandeur; it pleaſes me to think that I who know ſo ſmall a portion of the works of the Creator, and with ſlow and painful ſteps creep up and down on the ſurface of this globe, ſhall ere long

long ſhoot away with the ſwiftneſs of imagination, trace out the hidden ſprings of nature's operation, be able to keep pace with the heavenly bodies in the rapidity of their career, be a ſpectator of of the long chain of events in the natural and moral worlds, viſit the ſeveral apartments of the creation, know how they are furniſhed and how inhabited, comprehend the order, and meaſure the magnitudes, and diſtances of thoſe orbs, which to us ſeem diſpoſed without any regular deſign, and ſet all in the ſame circle; obſerve the dependence of the parts of each ſyſtem, and, if our minds are big enough to graſp the theory of the ſeveral ſyſtems upon one another, from whence reſults the harmony of the univerſe. In eternity a great deal may be done of this kind. I find it of uſe to cheriſh this generous ambition; for beſides the ſecret refreſhment it diffuſes through my ſoul, it engages me in an endeavour to improve my faculties, as well as to exerciſe them conformably to the rank I now hold among reaſonable beings, and the hope I have of being once advanced to a more exalted ſtation.

The other, and that the ultimate end of man, is the enjoyment of God beyond which he cannot form a wiſh. Dim at beſt are the conceptions we have of the ſupreme Being, who, as it were, keeps his creatures in ſuſpence, neither diſcovering, nor hiding himſelf; by which means the Libertine hath a handle to diſpute his exiſtence, while the moſt are content to ſpeak him fair, but in their hearts prefer every trifling ſatisfaction to the favour of their Maker, and ridicule the good man for the ſingularity of his choice. Will there not a time come, when the Free-thinker ſhall ſee his impious ſchemes overturned, and be made a convert to the truths he hates; when deluded

mortals ſhall be convinced of the folly of their purſuits, and the few wiſe who followed the guidance of heaven, and, ſcorning the blandiſhments of ſenſe and the ſordid bribery of the world, aſpired to a celeſtial abode, ſhall ſtand poſſeſſed of their utmoſt wiſh in the viſion of the Creator? Here the mind heaves a thought now and then towards him, and hath ſome tranſient glances of his preſence: when in the inſtant it thinks itſelf to have the faſteſt hold, the object eludes its expectations, and it falls back tired and baffled to the ground. Doubtleſs there is ſome more perfect way of converſing with heavenly beings. Are not ſpirits capable of mutual intelligence, unleſs immerſed in bodies, or by their intervention? Muſt ſuperior natures depend on inferior for the main privilege of ſociable beings, that of converſing with, and knowing each other? What would they have done, had matter never been created? I ſuppoſe, not have lived in eternal ſolitude. As incorporeal ſubſtances are of a nobler order, ſo be ſure, their manner of intercourſe is anſwerably more expedite and intimate. This method of communication we call intellectual viſion, as ſomewhat analogous to the ſenſe of ſeeing, which is the medium of our acquaintance with this viſible world. And in ſome ſuch way can God make himſelf the object of immediate intuition to the bleſſed; and as he can, it is not improbable that he will, always condeſcending, in the circumſtances of doing it, to the weakneſs and proportion of finite minds. His works but faintly reflect the image of his perfections, it is a ſecond-hand knowledge: to have a juſt idea of him, it may be neceſſary that we ſee him as he is. But what is that? It is ſomething that never entered into the heart of man to conceive; yet, what we can eaſily conceive, will be

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a fountain of unſpeakable, of everlaſting rapture. All created glories will fade and die away in his preſence. Perhaps it will be my happineſs to compare the world with the fair exemplar of it in the divine mind; perhaps, to view the original plan of thoſe wiſe deſigns that have been executing in a long ſucceſſion of ages. Thus employed in finding out his works, and contemplating their author, how ſhall I fall proſtrate and adoring, my body ſwallowed up in the immenſity of matter, my mind in the infinitude of his perfections!

Multa putans, ſortemque animo miſeratus iniquam.
Virg. Æneid. VI. v. 332.

Revolving in his breaſt their fate unkind,
A gen'rous pity fills his pious mind.

IN compaſſion to thoſe gloomy mortals, who by their unbelief are rendered incapable of feeling thoſe impreſſions of joy and hope, which the celebration of the late glorious Eaſter feſtival naturally leaves on the mind of a Chriſtian, I ſhall in this paper endeavour to evince that there are grounds to expect a future ſtate, without ſuppoſing in the reader any faith at all, not even the belief of a Deity. Let the moſt ſtedfaſt unbeliever open his eyes, and take a ſurvey of the ſenſible world, and then ſay if there be not a connexion, and adjuſtment, an exact and conſtant order diſcoverable in all the parts of it. Whatever be the cauſe, the thing itſelf is evident to all our faculties. Look into the animal ſyſtem, the paſſions, ſenſes, and locomotive powers; is not the like contrivance and propriety obſervable in theſe too? Are they not fitted to certain ends, and are they not by nature directed to proper objects?

Is it poſſible then that the ſmalleſt bodies ſhould, by a management ſuperior to the wit of man, be diſpoſed in the moſt excellent manner agreeable to their reſpective natures; and yet the ſpirits or ſouls of men be neglected, or managed by ſuch rules as fall ſhort of man's underſtanding? Shall every other paſſion be rightly placed by nature, and ſhall that appetite of immortality natural to all mankind be alone miſplaced, or deſigned to be fruſtrated? Shall the induſtrious application of the inferior animal powers in the meaneſt vocations be anſwered by the ends we propoſe, and ſhall not the generous efforts of a virtuous mind be rewarded? In a word, ſhall the corporeal world be all order and harmony, the intellectual diſcord and confuſion? He, who is bigot enough to believe theſe things, muſt bid adieu to that natural rule of reaſoning from analogy; muſt run counter to that maxim of common ſenſe, "That men ought to "form their judgments of things unexperienced "from what they have experienced."

If any thing looks like a recompence of calamitous virtue on this ſide the grave, it is either an aſſurance that thereby we obtain the favour and protection of heaven, and ſhall, whatever befals us in this, in another life meet with a juſt return; or elſe that applauſe and reputation, which is thought to attend virtuous actions. The former of theſe, our Free-thinkers, out of their ſingular wiſdom and benevolence to mankind, endeavour to eraſe from the minds of men. The latter can never be juſtly diſtributed in this life, where ſo many ill actions are reputable, and ſo many good actions diſeſteemed or miſinterpreted; where ſubtle hypocriſy is placed in the moſt engaging light, and modeſt virtue lies concealed; where the heart and the ſoul are hid from the eyes of men, and

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the eyes of men are dimmed and vitiated. Plato's ſenſe in relation to this point is contained in his Gorgias, where he introduces Socrates ſpeaking after this manner.

" It was in the reign of Saturn provided by a " law, which the gods have ſince continued down " to this time, That they who had lived virtuouſ- " ly and piouſly upon earth, ſhould after death en- " joy a life full of happineſs, in certain iſlands " appointed for the habitation of the bleſſed: but " that ſuch as had lived wickedly ſhould go into " the receptacle of damned ſouls, named Tartarus, " there to ſuffer the puniſhments they deſerved. " But in all the reign of Saturn, and in the be- " ginning of the reign of Jove, living judges were " appointed, by whom each perſon was judged " in his life-time in the ſame day on which he was " to die. The conſequence of which was, that " they often paſſed wrong judgments. Pluto, " therefore, who preſided in Tartarus, and the " guardians of the bleſſed iſlands, finding that, " on the other ſide, many unfit perſons were ſent " to their reſpective dominions, complained to " Jove, who promiſed to redreſs the evil. He " added, the reaſon of theſe unjuſt proceedings is " that men are judged in the body. Hence many " conceal the blemiſhes and imperfections of their " minds by beauty, birth and riches; not to men- " tion, that at the time of trial there are crouds " of witneſſes to atteſt their having lived well. " Theſe things miſlead the judges, who being " themſelves alſo of the number of the living " are ſurrounded each with his own body, as with " a veil thrown over his mind. For the future, " therefore, it is my intention that men do not " come on their trial till after death, when they " ſhall appear before the judge, diſrobed of all

" their

" their corporeal ornaments. The judge himſelf " too ſhall be a pure unveiled ſpirit, beholding the " very ſoul, the naked ſoul, of the party before him. " With this view I have already conſtituted my " ſons, Minos and Rhadamanthus, judges, who " are natives of Aſia; and Æacus, a native of Eu- " rope. Theſe, after death, ſhall hold their court " in a certain meadow, from which there are two " roads, leading the one to Tartarus, the other to " the iſlands of the bleſſed."

From this, as from numberleſs other paſſages of his writings, may be ſeen Plato's opinion of a future ſtate. A thing therefore in regard to us ſo comfortable, in itſelf ſo juſt and excellent, a thing ſo agreeable to the analogy of nature, and ſo univerſally credited by all orders and ranks of men, of all nations and ages, what is it that ſhould move a few men to reject? Surely there muſt be ſomething of prejudice in the caſe. I appeal to the ſecret thoughts of a Free-thinker, if he does not argue within himſelf after this manner: The ſenſes and faculties I enjoy at preſent are viſibly deſigned to repair, or preſerve the body from the injuries it is liable to in its preſent circumſtances. But in an eternal ſtate where no decays are to be repaired, no outward injuries to be fenced againſt, where there are no fleſh and bones, nerves or blood-veſſels, there will certainly be none of the ſenſes: And that there ſhould be a ſtate of life without the ſenſes is inconceivable.

But as this manner of reaſoning proceeds from a poverty of imagination, and narrowneſs of ſoul in thoſe that uſe it, I ſhall endeavour to remedy thoſe defects, and open their views, by laying before them a caſe which, being naturally poſſible, may perhaps reconcile them to the belief of what is ſupernaturally revealed.

Let

Let us ſuppoſe a perſon blind and deaf from his birth, who being grown to man's eſtate, is by the dead-palſy, or ſome other cauſe, deprived of his feeling, taſting, and ſmelling; and at the ſame time has the impediment of his hearing removed, and the film taken from his eyes: what the five ſenſes are to us, that the touch, taſte, and ſmell were to him. And any other ways of perception of a more refined and extenſive nature were to him as inconceivable, as to us thoſe are, which will one day be adapted to perceive thoſe things which "eye hath not ſeen, "nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the "heart of man to conceive." And it would be juſt as reaſonable in him to conclude, that the loſs of thoſe three ſenſes could not poſſibly be ſucceeded by any new inlets of perception; as in a modern Free-thinker to imagine there can be no ſtate of life and perception without the ſenſes he enjoys at preſent. Let us further ſuppoſe the ſame perſon's eyes, at their firſt opening, to be ſtruck with a great variety of the moſt gay and pleaſing objects, and his ears with a melodious concert of vocal and inſtrumental muſic: behold him amazed, raviſhed, tranſported; and you have ſome diſtant repreſentation, ſome faint and glimmering idea of the ecſtatic ſtate of the ſoul in that article in which ſhe emerges from this ſepulchre of fleſh into life and immortality.

Labitur

Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis aevum.
Hor. epiſt. II. l. 1. v. 43.

It glides, and will for ever glide along.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

"THERE are none of your ſpeculations which "pleaſe me more than thoſe upon infinitude "and eternity. You have already conſidered that "part of eternity which is paſt, and I wiſh you "would give us your thoughts upon that which is "to come.

"Your readers will perhaps receive greater plea-"ſure from this view of eternity than the former, "ſince we have every one of us a concern in that "which is to come: whereas a ſpeculation on "that which is paſt is rather curious than uſeful.

"Beſides, we can eaſily conceive it poſſible for "ſucceſſive duration never to have an end; though "as you have juſtly obſerved, that eternity which "never had a beginning is altogether incompre-"henſible; that is, we can conceive an eternal "duration which may be, though we cannot an "eternal duration which hath been; or, if I may "uſe the philoſophical terms, we may apprehend a "potential, though not an actual eternity.

"This notion of a future eternity, which is na-"tural to the mind of man, is an unanſwerable "argument that he is a being deſigned for it: e-"ſpecially if we conſider that he is capable of be-"ing virtuous or vitious here; that he hath fa-"culties improvable to all eternity; and, by a "proper or wrong employment of them, may be "happy or miſerable throughout that infinite du-"ration. Our idea indeed of this eternity is not "of an adequate or fixed nature, but is perpetual-

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" ly growing and enlarging itſelf toward the object,
" which is too big for human comprehenſion. As
" we are now in the beginnings of exiſtence, ſo
" ſhall we always appear to ourſelves as if we were
" for ever entering upon it. After a million or
" two of centuries, ſome conſiderable things,
" already paſt, may ſlip out of our memory;
" which, if it be not ſtrengthned in a wonderful
" manner, may poſſibly forget that ever there was
" a ſun or planets. And yet, notwithſtanding the
" long race that we ſhall then have run, we ſhall
" ſtill imagine ourſelves juſt ſtarting from the goal,
" and find no proportion between that ſpace which
" we know had a beginning, and what we are ſure
" will never have an end.

" But I ſhall leave this ſubject to your manage-
" ment, and queſtion not but you will throw it
" into ſuch lights as ſhall at once improve and en-
" tertain your reader.

" I have incloſed ſent you a tranſlation of the
" ſpeech of Cato on this occaſion, which hath ac-
" cidentally fallen into my hands, and which for
" conciſeneſs, purity, and elegance of phraſe can-
" not be ſufficiently admired."

ACT.

ACT. V. SCEN. I.

CATO *ſolus, &c.*

SIC, ſic ſe habere rem neceſſe prorsùs eſt,
Ratione vincis, do lubens manus, Plato.
Quid enim dediſſet, Quæ dedit fruſtra nihil,
Æternitatis inſitam cupidinem
Natura? Quorſum hæc dulcis expectatio;
Vitæque non explenda melioris ſitis?
Quid vult ſibi aliud iſte redeundi in nihil
Horror, ſub imis quemque agens præcordiis?
Cur territa in ſe refugit anima, cur tremit
Attonita, quoties, morte ne pereat, timet?
Particula nempe eſt cuique naſcenti indita
Divinior; quæ corpus incolens agit;
Hominique ſuccinit, tua eſt Æternitas.
Æternitas! O lubricum nimis aſpici,
Mixtumque dulci gaudium formidine!

Quæ demigrabitur alia hinc in corpora?
Quæ terra mox incognita? Quis orbis novus,
Manet incolendus? Quanta erit mutatio?
Hæc intuenti ſpatia mihi quaquà patent
Immenſa: ſed caliginoſa nox premit;
Nec luce clarâ vult videri ſingula.
Figendus hìc pes; certa ſunt hæc hactenus:
Si quod gubernet numen humanum genus,
(Ait, quod gubernet, eſſe clamant omnia)
Virtute non gaudere certè non poteſt:
Nec eſſe non beata, quâ gaudet poteſt.
Sed quâ beata ſede? Quove in tempore?
Hæc quanta quanta terra, tota eſt Cæſaris.
Quid dubius hæret animus uſque adeò? Brevi
Hic nodum hic omnem expediet. Arma en induor,
[Enſi manum admovens.

In

ACT V. SCENE I.

CATO alone, *&c.*

IT muſt be ſo——*Plato*, thou reaſon'ſt well——
Elſe whence this pleaſing hope, this fond deſire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this ſecret dread, and inward horror,
Of falling into nought? Why ſhrinks the ſoul
Back on herſelf, and ſtartles at deſtruction?
'Tis the divinity that ſtirs within us;
'Tis heav'n itſelf, that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.
Eternity! thou pleaſing, dreadful, thought!

Through what variety of untry'd being,
Through what new ſcenes and changes muſt we paſs!
The wide, th' unbounded proſpect, lies before me;
But ſhadows, clouds, and darkneſs reſt upon it.
Here will I hold. If there's a pow'r above us,
(And that there is all nature cries aloud
Through all her works) He muſt delight in virtue;
And that which he delights in muſt be happy.
But when! or where!——This world was made for *Cæſar*.
I'm weary of conjectures——This muſt end 'em.
[*Laying his hand on his ſword.*

In utramque partem facta; quæque vim inferant,
Et quæ propulsent! Dextera intentat necem;
Vitam sinistra: vulnus hæc dabit manus;
Altera medelam vulneris: hic ad exitum
Deducet, ictu simplici; hæc vetant mori.
Secura ridet anima mucronis minas,
Ensesque strictos, interire nescia.
Extinguet ætas sidera diuturnior:
Ætate languens ipse sol obscuriùs
Emittet orbi consenescenti jubar:
Natura et ipsa sentiet quondam vices
Ætatis; annis ipsa deficiet gravis;
At tibi juventus, at tibi immortalitas;
Tibi parta divûm est vita. Periment mutuis
Elementa sese et interibunt ictibus:
Tu permanebis sola semper integra,
Tu cuncta rerum quassa, cuncta naufraga,
Jam portu in ipso tuta, contemplabere.
Compage ruptâ, corruent in se invicem,
Orbesque fractis ingerentur orbibus;
Illæsa tu sedebis extra fragmina.

Igneus

Thus am I doubly arm'd; my death and life,
My bane and antidote are both before me.
This in a moment brings me to an end;
But this informs me I ſhall never die.
The ſoul, ſecur'd in her exiſtence, ſmiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
The ſtars ſhall fade away, the ſun himſelf
Grow dim with age, and nature ſink in years;
But thou ſhalt flouriſh in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidſt the war of elements,
The wrecks of matter and the cruſh of worlds.

Igneus eſt ollis vigor, et coeleſtis origo
Seminibus——————Virg. Æneid. VI. v. 730.

Th' etherial vigour is in all the ſame,
And ev'ry ſoul is fill'd with equal flame. DRYDEN.

THE ſame faculty of reaſon and underſtanding, which placeth us above the brute part of the creation, doth alſo ſubject our minds to greater and more manifold diſquiets than creatures of an inferior rank are ſenſible of. It is by this that we anticipate future diſaſters, and oft create to ourſelves real pain from imaginary evils, as well as multiply the pangs ariſing from thoſe which cannot be avoided.

It behoves us therefore to make the beſt uſe of that ſublime talent, which, ſo long as it continues the inſtrument of paſſion, will ſerve only to make us more miſerable, in proportion as we are more excellent than other beings.

It is the privilege of a thinking being to withdraw from the objects that ſolicit his ſenſes, and turn his thoughts inward on himſelf. For my own part, I often mitigate the pain ariſing from the little misfortunes and diſappointments that chequer human life by this introverſion of my faculties, wherein I regard my own ſoul as the image of her Creator, and receive great conſolation from beholding thoſe perfections which teſtify her divine original, and lead me into ſome knowledge of her everlaſting archetype.

But there is not any property or circumſtance of my being that I contemplate with more joy than my immortality. I can eaſily overlook my preſent momentary ſorrow, when I reflect that it is in my power to be happy a thouſand years hence. If it were not for this thought, I had rather be an

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oiſter than a man, the moſt ſtupid and ſenſeleſs of animals than a reaſonable mind tortured with an extreme innate deſire of that perfection which it deſpairs to obtain.

It is with great pleaſure that I behold inſtinct, reaſon, and faith concurring to atteſt this comfortable truth. It is revealed from heaven, it is diſcovered by philoſophers, and the ignorant, unenlightened part of mankind have a natural propenſity to believe it. It is an agreeable entertainment to reflect on the various ſhapes under which this doctrine has appeared in the world. The Pythagorean tranſmigration, the ſenſual habitations of the Mahometan, and the ſhady realms of Pluto, do all agree in the main points, the continuation of our exiſtence, and the diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments, proportioned to the merits or demerits of men in this life.

But in all theſe ſchemes there is ſomething groſs and improbable, that ſhocks a reaſonable and ſpeculative mind. Whereas nothing can be more rational and ſublime than the Chriſtian idea of a future ſtate. "Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, "neither hath it entered into the heart of man to "conceive the things which God hath prepared "for thoſe that love him." The above mentioned ſchemes are narrow tranſcripts of our preſent ſtate: but in this indefinite deſcription there is ſomething ineffably great and noble. The mind of man muſt be raiſed to a higher pitch, not only to partake the enjoyments of the Chriſtian paradiſe, but even to be able to frame any notion of them.

Nevertheleſs, in order to gratify our imagination, and by way of condeſcenſion to our low way of thinking, the ideas of light, glory, a crown, *&c.* are made uſe of to adumbrate that which we cannot directly underſtand. "The Lamb which is in

" the midſt of the throne ſhall feed them, and " ſhall lead them into living fountains of waters; " and God ſhall wipe away all tears from their " eyes. And there ſhall be no more death, nei- " ther ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be " any more pain; for the former things are paſ- " ſed away, and behold all things are new. There " ſhall be no night there, and they need no " candle, neither light of the ſun: for the Lord " God giveth them light, and ſhall make them " drink of the river of his pleaſures: and they " ſhall reign for ever and ever. They ſhall " receive a crown of glory which fadeth not " away."

Theſe are cheering reflexions: and I have often wondered that men could be found ſo dull and phlegmatic, as to prefer the thought of annihilation before them; or ſo ill-natured, as to endeavour to perſuade mankind to the diſbelief of what is ſo pleaſing and profitable even in the proſpect; or ſo blind, as not to ſee that there is a Deity, and if there be, that this ſcheme of things flows from his attributes, and evidently correſponds with the other parts of his creation.

I know not how to account for this abſurd turn of thought, except it proceed from a want of other employment, joined with an affectation of ſingularity. I ſhall, therefore, inform our modern Free-thinkers of two points, whereof they ſeem to be ignorant. The firſt is, that it is not the being ſingular, but being ſingular for ſomething that argues either extraordinary enduements of nature, or benevolent intentions to mankind, which draws the admiration and eſteem of the world. A miſtake in this point naturally ariſes from that confuſion of thought which I do not remember to have ſeen ſo great

great inſtances of in any writers, as in certain modern Free-thinkers.

The other point is, that there are innumerable objects within the reach of a human mind, and each of theſe objects may be viewed in innumerable lights and poſitions, and the relations ariſing between them are innumerable. There is, therefore, an infinity of things whereon to employ their thoughts, if not with advantage to the world, at leaſt with amuſement to themſelves, and without offence or prejudice to other people. If they proceed to exert their talent of Free-thinking in this way; they may be innocently dull, and no one take any notice of it. But to ſee men without either wit or argument pretend to run down divine and human laws, and treat their fellow-ſubjects with contempt for profeſſing a belief of thoſe points on which the preſent as well as future intereſt of mankind depends, is not to be endured. For my own part, I ſhall omit no endeavours to render their perſons as deſpicable, and their practices as odious, in the eye of the world, as they deſerve.

——Solemque ſuum, ſua ſidera nôrunt.
Virg. Æneid. VI. v. 641.

Stars of their own, and their own ſuns they know.
DRYDEN.

I Have already taken a particular pleaſure in examining the opinions which men of different religions, different ages, and different countries, have entertained concerning the immortality of the ſoul, and the ſtate of happineſs, which they promiſe themſelves in another world. For whatever prejudices and errors human nature lies under, we find that either reaſon, or tradition from our firſt

firſt parents, has diſcovered to all people ſomething in theſe great points which bears analogy to truth, and to the doctrines opened to us by divine revelation. I was lately diſcourſing on this ſubject with a learned perſon, who has been very much converſant among the inhabitants of the more Weſtern parts of Afric. Upon his converſing with ſeveral in that country, he tells me that their notion of heaven, or of a future ſtate of happineſs is this, That every thing we there wiſh for will immediately preſent itſelf to us. We find, ſay they, our ſouls are of ſuch a nature that they require variety, and are not capable of being always delighted with the ſame objects. The ſupreme Being, therefore, in compliance with this taſte of happineſs which he has planted in the ſoul of man, will raiſe up, from time to time, ſay they, every gratification which it is in the humour to be pleaſed with. If we wiſh to be in groves or bowers, among running ſtreams or falls of water, we ſhall immediately find ourſelves in the midſt of ſuch a ſcene as we deſire. If we would be entertained with muſic and the melody of ſounds, the conſort ariſes upon our wiſh, and the whole region about us is filled with harmony. In ſhort, every deſire will be followed by fruition, and whatever a man's inclination directs him to, will be preſent with him. Nor is it material, whether the ſupreme Power creates in conformity to our wiſhes, or whether he only produces ſuch a change in our imagination, as makes us believe ourſelves converſant among thoſe ſcenes which delight us. Our happineſs will be the ſame, whether it proceed from external objects, or from the impreſſions of the Deity upon our own private fancies. This is the account which I have received from my learned friend. Notwithſtanding this ſyſtem of belief

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be in general very chimerical and viſionary, there is ſomething ſublime in its manner of conſidering the influence of a divine Being on a human ſoul. It has alſo, like moſt other opinions of the Heathen world upon theſe important points, it has, I ſay, its foundation in truth, as it ſuppoſes the ſouls of good men after this life to be in a ſtate of perfect happineſs; that in this ſtate there will be no barren hopes, nor fruitleſs wiſhes, and that we ſhall enjoy every thing we can deſire. But the particular circumſtance which I am moſt pleaſed with in this ſcheme, and which ariſes from a juſt reflexion upon human nature, is that variety of pleaſures which it ſuppoſes the ſouls of good men will be poſſeſſed of in another world. This I think highly probable, from the dictates both of reaſon and revelation. The ſoul conſiſts of many faculties, as the underſtanding, and the will, with all the ſenſes both outward and inward; or, to ſpeak more philoſophically, the ſoul can exert herſelf in many different ways of action. She can underſtand, will, imagine, ſee, and hear, love, and diſcourſe, and apply herſelf to many other the like exerciſes of different kinds and natures; but what is more to be conſidered, the ſoul is capable of receiving a moſt exquiſite pleaſure and ſatisfaction from the exerciſe of any of theſe its powers, when they are gratified with their proper objects; ſhe can be entirely happy by the ſatisfaction of the memory, the ſight, the hearing, or any other mode of perception. Every faculty is as a diſtinct taſte in the mind, and hath objects accommodated to its proper reliſh. Dr. Tillotſon ſomewhere ſays that he will not preſume to determine in what conſiſts the happineſs of the bleſſed, becauſe God Almighty is capable of making the ſoul happy by ten thouſand different ways. Beſides thoſe ſeveral avenues to

pleaſure

pleaſure which the ſoul is endued with in this life, it is not impoſſible, according to the opinions of many eminent divines, but there may be new faculties in the ſouls of good men made perfect, as well as new ſenſes in their glorified bodies. This we are ſure of, that there will be new objects offered to all thoſe faculties which are eſſential to us.

We are likewiſe to take notice that every particular faculty is capable of being employed on a very great variety of objects. The underſtanding, for example, may be happy in the contemplation of moral, natural, mathematical, and other kinds of truth. The memory likewiſe may turn itſelf to an infinite multitude of objects, eſpecially when the ſoul ſhall have paſſed through the ſpace of many millions of years, and ſhall reflect with pleaſure on the days of eternity. Every other faculty may be conſidered in the ſame extent.

We cannot queſtion but that the happineſs of a ſoul will be adequate to its nature, and that it is not endued with any faculties which are to ly uſeleſs and unemployed. The happineſs is to be the happineſs of the whole man, and we may eaſily conceive to ourſelves the happineſs of the ſoul, while any one of its faculties is in the fruition of its chief good. The happineſs may be of a more exalted nature in proportion as the faculty employed is ſo; but as the whole ſoul acts in the exertion of any of its particular powers, the whole ſoul is happy in the pleaſure which ariſes from any of its particular acts. For notwithſtanding, as has been before hinted, and as it has been taken notice of by one of the greateſt modern philoſophers, we divide the ſoul into ſeveral powers and faculties, there is no ſuch diviſion in the ſoul itſelf, ſince it is the whole ſoul that remembers, underſtands, wills, or imagines.

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Our manner of conſidering the memory, underſtanding, will, imagination, and the like faculties, is for the better enabling us to expreſs ourſelves in ſuch abſtracted ſubjects of ſpeculation, not that there is any ſuch diviſion in the ſoul itſelf.

Seeing then that the ſoul has many different faculties, or in other words, many different ways of acting; that it can be intenſely pleaſed, or made happy by all theſe different faculties or ways of acting; that it may be endued with ſeveral latent faculties, which it is not at preſent in a condition to exert; that we cannot believe the ſoul is endued with any faculty which is of no uſe to it; that whenever any one of theſe faculties is tranſcendently pleaſed, the ſoul is in a ſtate of happineſs; and, in the laſt place, conſidering that the happineſs of another world is to be the happineſs of the whole man; who can queſtion but that there is an infinite variety in thoſe pleaſures we are ſpeaking of; and that this fulneſs of joy will be made up of all thoſe pleaſures which the nature of the ſoul is capable of receiving?

We ſhall be the more confirmed in this doctrine, if we obſerve the nature of variety, with regard to the mind of man. The ſoul does not care to be always in the ſame bent. The faculties relieve one another by turns, and receive an additional pleaſure from the novelty of thoſe objects about which they are converſant.

Revelation likewiſe very much confirms this notion, under the different views which it gives us of our future happineſs. In the deſcription of the throne of God, it repreſents to us all thoſe objects which are able to gratify the ſenſes and imagination: in very many places it intimates to us all the happineſs which the underſtanding can poſſibly receive in that ſtate, where all things ſhall be reveal-

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ed to us, and we ſhall know, even as we are known; the raptures of devotion, of divine love, the pleaſure of converſing with our bleſſed Saviour, with an innumerable hoſt of angels, and with the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, are likewiſe revealed to us in ſeveral parts of the holy writings. There are alſo mentioned thoſe hierarchies of governments, in which the bleſſed ſhall be ranged one above another, and in which we may be ſure a great part of our happineſs will likewiſe conſiſt; for it will not be there as in this world, where every one is aiming at power and ſuperiority; but on the contrary, every one will find that ſtation the moſt proper for him in which he is placed, and will probably think that he could not have been ſo happy in any other ſtation. Theſe, and many other particulars, are marked in divine revelation, as the ſeveral ingredients of our happineſs in heaven, which all imply ſuch a variety of joys, and ſuch a gratification of the ſoul in all its different faculties, as I have been here mentioning.

Some of the rabbins tell us, that the cherubims are a ſet of angels who know moſt, and the ſeraphims a ſet of angels who love moſt. Whether this diſtinction be not altogether imaginary, I ſhall not here examine; but it is highly probable, that among the ſpirits of good men, there may be ſome who will be more pleaſed with the employment of one faculty than of another, and this perhaps according to thoſe innocent and virtuous habits or inclinations which have here taken the deepeſt root.

I might here apply this conſideration to the ſpirits of wicked men, with relation to the pain which they ſhall ſuffer in every one of their faculties, and the reſpective miſeries which ſhall be appropriated to each faculty in particular. But leaving this to the reflexion of my readers, I ſhall conclude, with obſerving

obſerving how we ought to be thankful to our great Creator, and rejoice in the being which he has beſtowed upon us, for having made the ſoul ſuſceptible of pleaſure by ſo many different ways. We ſee by what a variety of paſſages joy and gladneſs may enter into the thoughts of man; how wonderfully a human ſpirit is framed, to imbibe its proper ſatisfactions, and taſte the goodneſs of its Creator. We may therefore look into ourſelves with rapture and amazement, and cannot ſufficiently expreſs our gratitude to him, who has encompaſſed us with ſuch a profuſion of bleſſings, and opened in us ſo many capacities of enjoying them.

There cannot be a ſtronger argument that God has deſigned us for a ſtate of future happineſs, and for that heaven which he has revealed to us, than that he has thus naturally qualified the ſoul for it, and made it a being capable of receiving ſo much bliſs. He would never have made ſuch faculties in vain, and have endued us with powers that were not to be exerted on ſuch objects as are ſuited to them. It is very manifeſt, by the inward frame and conſtitution of our minds, that he has adapted them to an infinite variety of pleaſures and gratifications, which are not to be met with in this life. We ſhould therefore at all times take care that we do not diſappoint this his gracious purpoſe and intention towards us, and make thoſe faculties which he formed as ſo many qualifications for happineſs and rewards, to be the inſtruments of pain and puniſhment. *

SECTION XI.

DEATH *and* JUDGMENT.

To the Author of the GUARDIAN.

SIR,

"THE incloſed is a faithful tranſlation from "an old author, which if it deſerves your no- "tice, let the readers gueſs whether he was a Hea- "then or a Chriſtian.

I am

Your moſt humble Servant.

"I cannot, my friends, forbear letting you "know what I think of death; for, methinks, I "view and underſtand it much better, the nearer I "approach to it. I am convinced that your fathers, "thoſe illuſtrious perſons whom I ſo much loved "and honoured, do not ceaſe to live, though they "have paſſed through what we call death; they "are undoubtedly ſtill living, but it is that ſort of "life which alone deſerves truly to be called *life*. "In effect, while we are confined to bodies we "ought to eſteem ourſelves no other than a ſort of "galley-ſlaves at the chain, ſince the ſoul, which "is ſomewhat divine, and deſcends from heaven "as the place of its original, ſeems debaſed and "diſhonoured by this mixture of fleſh and blood, "and to be in a ſtate of baniſhment from its celeſtial "country. I cannot help thinking too, that one "main reaſon of uniting ſouls to bodies, was, that "the great work of the univerſe might have ſpecta- "tors to admire the beautiful order of nature, the "regular motion of heavenly bodies, who ſhould

"ſtrive

" ſtrive to expreſs that regularity in the uniformi-
" ty of their lives. When I conſider the bound-
" leſs activity of our minds, the remembrance we
" have of things paſt, our foreſight of what is to
" come: when I reflect on the noble diſcoveries,
" and vaſt improvements, by which theſe minds
" have advanced arts and ſciences; I am entirely
" perſuaded, and out of all doubt, that a nature
" which has in itſelf a fund of ſo many excellent
" things cannot poſſibly be mortal. I obſerve
" further, that my mind is altogether ſimple,
" without the mixture of any ſubſtance or nature
" different from its own; I conclude from thence
" that it is indiviſible, and conſequently cannot
" periſh.

" By no means think therefore, my dear friends,
" when I ſhall have quitted you, that I ceaſe to
" be, or ſhall ſubſiſt no where. Remember that
" while we live together you do not ſee my mind,
" and yet are ſure that I have one actuating and
" moving my body; doubt not then but that this
" ſame mind will have a being when it is ſeparated,
" though you cannot then perceive its actions.
" What nonſenſe would it be to pay thoſe ho-
" nours to great men after their deaths, which we
" conſtantly do, if their ſouls did not then ſub-
" ſiſt? For my own part, I could never ima-
" gine that our minds live only when united to bo-
" dies, and die when they leave them; or that
" they ſhall ceaſe to think and underſtand, when
" diſengaged from bodies, which without them
" have neither ſenſe or reaſon: on the contrary,
" I believe the ſoul, when ſeparated from matter,
" to enjoy the greateſt purity and ſimplicity of its
" nature, and to have much more wiſdom and
" light than while it was united. We ſee when
" the body dies what becomes of all the parts

" which compoſed it; but we do not ſee the " mind, either in the body, or when it leaves it. " Nothing more reſembles death than ſleep, and " it is in that ſtate that the ſoul chiefly ſhews " it has ſomething divine in its nature. How " much more then muſt it ſhew it, when entirely " diſengaged?"

——Afflata eſt numine quando
Jam propiore Dei——Virg. Æneid. VI. v. 250.
When all the god came ruſhing on her ſoul. DRYDEN.

THE following letter comes to me from that excellent man in holy orders, whom I have mentioned more than once as one of that ſociety who aſſiſt me in my ſpeculations. It is a thought in ſickneſs, and of a very ſerious nature, for which reaſon I give it a place in the paper of this day.

SIR,

' THE indiſpoſition which has long hung upon ' me, is at laſt grown to ſuch a head, that it ' muſt quickly make an end of me, or of itſelf. You ' may imagine, that whilſt I am in this bad ſtate ' of health, there are none of your works which ' I read with greater pleaſure than your Saturday's ' papers. I ſhould be very glad if I could furniſh ' you with any hints for that day's entertainment. ' Were I able to dreſs up ſeveral thoughts of a ſe- ' rious nature, which have made great impreſſions ' on my mind during a long fit of ſickneſs, they ' might not be an improper entertainment for that ' occaſion.

' Among all the reflexions which uſually riſe in ' the mind of a ſick man, who has time and in- ' clination to conſider his approaching end, there ' is

'is none more natural than that of his going to ap-
'pear naked and unbodied before him who made
'him. When a man conſiders, that, as ſoon as the
'vital union is diſſolved, he ſhall ſee that ſupreme
'Being, whom he now contemplates at a diſtance,
'and only in his works; or, to ſpeak more philo-
'ſophically, when by ſome faculty in the ſoul he
'ſhall apprehend the divine Being, and be more
'ſenſible of his preſence, than we are now of the
'preſence of any object which the eye beholds: a
'man muſt be loſt in careleſſneſs and ſtupidity,
'who is not alarmed at ſuch a thought! Dr. Sher-
'lock, in his excellent Treatiſe upon death, has
'repreſented, in very ſtrong and lively colours,
'the ſtate of the ſoul in its firſt ſeparation from
'the body, with regard to that inviſible world
'which every where ſurrounds us, though we are
'not able to diſcover it through this groſſer world
'of matter, which is accommodated to our ſenſes
'in this life.' His words are as follow.

"That death, which is our leaving this world,
"is nothing elſe but our putting off theſe bodies,
"teaches us, that it is only our union to theſe bodies
"which intercepts the ſight of the other world:
"the other world is not at ſuch a diſtance from us
"as we may imagine; the throne of God indeed is
"at a great remove from this earth, above the
"third heavens, where he diſplays his glory to
"thoſe bleſſed ſpirits which encompaſs his throne;
"but as ſoon as we ſtep out of theſe bodies, we
"ſtep into the other world, which is not ſo
"properly another world, (for there is the ſame
"heaven and earth ſtill) as a new ſtate of life.
"To live in theſe bodies is to live in this world,
"to live out of them is to remove into the next:
"for while our ſouls are confined to theſe bodies,

" and can look only through theſe material caſe-
" ments, nothing but what is material can affect
" us; nay, nothing but what is ſo groſs, that it
" can reflect light, and convey the ſhapes and
" colours of things with it to the eye: ſo that
" though within this viſible world, there be a
" more glorious ſcene of things than what ap-
" pears to us, we perceive nothing at all of it;
" for this veil of fleſh parts the viſible and invi-
" ſible world: but when we put off theſe bodies,
" there are new and ſurpriſing wonders preſent
" themſelves to our views; when theſe material
" ſpectacles are taken off, the ſoul, with its own
" naked eyes, ſees what was inviſible before: and
" then we are in the other world, when we can
" ſee it, and converſe with it: thus St. Paul
" tells us, That when we are at home in the
" body, we are abſent from the Lord; but when
" we are abſent from the body, we are preſent
" with the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 6. 8. And, me-
" thinks, this is enough to cure us of our
" fondneſs for theſe bodies, unleſs we think it
" more deſirable to be confined to a priſon, and
" to look through a grate all our lives, which
" gives us but a very narrow proſpect, and that
" none of the beſt neither, than to be ſet at li-
" berty to view all the glories of the world.
" What would we give now for the leaſt glimpſe
" of that inviſible world, which the firſt ſtep we
" take out of theſe bodies will preſent us with?
" There are ſuch things as eye hath not ſeen,
" nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the
" heart of man to conceive: death opens our
" eyes, enlarges our proſpect, preſents us with
" a new and more glorious world, which we can
" never ſee while we are ſhut up in fleſh; which
" ſhould makes us as willing to part with this

" veil,

" veil, as to take the film off our eyes, which " hinders our ſight.

' As a thinking man cannot but be very much af-
' fected with the idea of his appearing in the pre-
' ſence of that Being whom none can ſee and live;
' he muſt be much more affected when he conſi-
' ders that this Being whom he appears before,
' will examine all the actions of his paſt life, and
' reward or puniſh him accordingly. I muſt con-
' feſs that I think there is no ſcheme of religion,
' beſides that of Chriſtianity, which can poſſibly
' ſupport the moſt virtuous perſon under this
' thought. Let a man's innocence be what it
' will, let his virtues riſe to the higheſt pitch of
' perfection attainable in this life, there will be
' ſtill in him ſo many ſecret ſins, ſo many hu-
' man frailties, ſo many offences of ignorance,
' paſſion and prejudice, ſo many unguarded wo ds
' and thoughts, and, in ſhort, ſo many defects in
' his beſt actions, that, without the advantages
' of ſuch an expiation and atonement as Chriſti-
' anity has revealed to us, it is impoſſible that
' he ſhould be cleared before his ſovereign Judge,
' or that he ſhould be able to ſtand in his ſight.
' Our holy religion ſuggeſts to us the only means
' whereby our guilt may be taken away, and our
' imperfect obedience accepted.

' It is this ſeries of thought that I have endea-
' voured to expreſs in the following hymn, which
' I have compoſed during this my ſickneſs.'

I.

WHEN riſing from the bed of death,
O'erwhelm'd with guilt and fear,
I ſee my Maker, face to face,
O how ſhall I appear!

II. *If*

II.

If yet, while pardon may be found,
And mercy may be ſought,
My heart with inward horror ſhrinks,
And trembles at the thought.

III.

When thou, O Lord! ſhalt ſtand diſclos'd
In majeſty ſevere,
And ſit in judgment on my ſoul,
O how ſhall I appear!

IV.

But thou haſt told the troubled mind,
Who does her ſins lament,
The timely tribute of her tears
Shall endleſs woe prevent.

V.

Then ſee the ſorrows of my heart,
Ere yet it is too late;
And hear my Saviour's dying groans,
To give thoſe ſorrows weight.

VI.

For never ſhall my ſoul deſpair
Her pardon to procure,
Who knows thy only Son has dy'd
To make her pardon ſure.

——— *Animæque capaces*
Mortis ——— Lucan.

Our lives are ever in the pow'r of death.

THE proſpect of death is ſo gloomy and diſmal, that if it were conſtantly before our eyes, it would imbitter all the ſweets of life. The gracious Author of our being hath therefore ſo formed us, that we are capable of many pleaſing ſenſations and reflexions, and meet with ſo many amuſements and ſolicitudes, as divert our thoughts from dwelling upon an evil, which by reaſon of its ſeeming diſtance, makes but languid impreſſions upon the mind. But how diſtant ſoever the time of our death may be, ſince it is certain that we muſt die, it is neceſſary to allot ſome portion of our life to conſider the end of it; and it is highly convenient to fix ſome ſtated times to meditate upon the final period of our exiſtence here. The principle of ſelf-love, as we are men, will make us inquire, what is like to become of us after our diſſolution; and our conſcience, as we are Chriſtians, will inform us, that according to the good or evil of our actions here, we ſhall be tranſlated to the manſions of eternal bliſs or miſery. When this is ſeriouſly weighed, we muſt think it madneſs to be unprepared againſt the black moment; but when we reflect that, perhaps, that black moment may be to night, how watchful ought we to be!

I was wonderfully affected with a diſcourſe I had lately with a Clergyman of my acquaintance upon this head, which was to this effect: "The conſi-
"deration, ſaid the good man, that my being is
"precarious, moved me many years ago to make
"a reſolution, which I have diligently kept,
"and to which I owe the greateſt ſatisfaction that
"a mortal man can enjoy. Every night be-
"fore

" fore I addreſs myſelf in private to my Creator, " I lay my hand upon my heart, and aſk myſelf, " Whether if God ſhould require my ſoul of me " this night, I could hope for mercy from him? " The bitter agonies I underwent, in this my firſt " acquaintance with myſelf, were ſo far from " throwing me into deſpair of that mercy which " is over all God's works, that they rather proved " motives to greater circumſpection in my future " conduct. The oftner I exerciſed myſelf in me- " ditations of this kind, the leſs was my anxiety; " and by making the thoughts of death familiar, " what was at firſt ſo terrible and ſhocking is be- " come the ſweeteſt of my enjoyments. Theſe " contemplations have indeed made me ſerious, " but not ſullen; nay, they are ſo far from having " ſowred my temper, that as I have a mind per- " fectly compoſed, and a ſecret ſpring of joy in " my heart, ſo my converſation is pleaſant, and " my countenance ſerene. I taſte all the innocent " ſatisfactions of life pure and ſincere; I have no " ſhare in pleaſures that leave a ſting behind them, " nor am I cheated with that kind of mirth, in the " midſt of which there is heavineſs."

Omnem crede diem tibi diluxiſſe ſupremum.
Hor. lib. I. ep. IV. v. 13.

Think ev'ry day, ſoon as the day is paſt,
That thou haſt liv'd, of thy ſhort life, the laſt.

Mr. IRONSIDE,

THE following letter was really written by a young Gentleman in a languiſhing illneſs, which both himſelf, and thoſe who attended him, thought it impoſſible for him to outlive. If you think ſuch an image of the ſtate of a man's mind in that circumſtance be worth publiſhing, it is at your ſervice, and take it as follows.

Dear

Dear Sir,

" YOU formerly obſerved to me, that nothing
" made a more ridiculous figure in a man's
" life, than the diſparity we often find in him ſick
" and well. Thus, one of an unfortunate con-
" ſtitution is perpetually exhibiting a miſerable ex-
" ample of the weakneſs of his mind, or of his bo-
" dy, in their turns. I have had frequent oppor-
" tunities of late to conſider myſelf in theſe diffe-
" rent views, and hope I have received ſome ad-
" vantage by it. If what Mr. Waller ſays be
" true, that

The ſoul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
Lets in new light thro' chinks that time has made:

" Then ſurely ſickneſs, contributing no leſs than
" old age to the ſhaking down this ſcaffold-
" ing of the body, may diſcover the incloſed ſtru-
" cture more plainly. Sickneſs is a ſort of early
" old age; it teaches us a diffidence in our earth-
" ly ſtate, and inſpires us with the thoughts of a
" future, better than a thouſand volumes of phi-
" loſophers and divines. It gives ſo warning a
" concuſſion to thoſe props of our vanity, our
" ſtrength and youth, that we think of fortifying
" ourſelves within, when there is ſo little depen-
" dence on our out-works. Youth, at the very
" beſt, is but a betrayer of human life in a gentler
" and ſmoother manner than age: it is like a
" ſtream that nouriſhes a plant upon its bank, and
" cauſes it to flouriſh and bloſſom to the ſight, but
" at the ſame time is undermining it at the root in
" ſecret. My youth has dealt more fairly and o-
" penly with me; it has afforded ſeveral proſpects
" of my danger, and given me an advantage not
" very common to young men, that the attractions
" of the world have not dazzled me very much;

" and

" and I began where moſt people end, with a full " conviction of the emptineſs of all ſorts of am- " bition, and the unſatisfactory nature of all hu- " man pleaſures.

" When a ſmart fit of ſickneſs tells me this " ſcurvy tenement of my body will fall in a little " time, I am even as unconcerned as was that ho- " neſt Hibernian, who, being in bed in the great " ſtorm ſome years ago, and told the houſe would " tumble over his head, made anſwer, What care " I for the houſe? I am only a lodger. I fancy it " is the beſt time to die when one is in the beſt " humour; and ſo exceſſively weak as I now am, I " may ſay with conſcience, that I am not at all " uneaſy at the thought that many men, whom I " never had any eſteem for, are likely to enjoy this " world after me. When I reflect what an incon- " ſiderable little atom every ſingle man is, with " reſpect to the whole creation, methinks, it is a " ſhame to be concerned at the removal of ſuch a " trivial animal as I am. The morning after my " exit, the ſun will ariſe as bright as ever, the " flowers ſmell as ſweet, the plants ſpring as green, " the world will proceed in its old courſe, people " will laugh as heartily, and marry as faſt as they " were uſed to do. 'The memory of man (as it is " elegantly expreſſed in the Wiſdom of Solomon) " paſſeth away as the remembrance of a gueſt that " tarrieth but one day.' There are reaſons enough, " in the 4th chapter of the ſame book, to make any " young man contented with the proſpect of death. " For honourable age is not that which ſtandeth in " length of time, or is meaſured by number of years. " But wiſdom is the grey hair to men, and an un- " ſpotted life is old age.' He was taken away ſpeedi- " ly, leſt that wickedneſs ſhould alter his under- " ſtanding, or deceit beguile his ſoul." *I am, Your's.*

THE END.